Tertiary colleges: a study of perspectives on organizational innovation

Thesis

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Tertiary Colleges:

a study of perspectives on

organizational innovation

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore organisational innovation in education with reference to one particular type of organisation - the tertiary college. The research sought to examine the extent to which the intended objectives for new educational organisations are realised in practice, and how far the goals and ethos which organisational leaders seek to promote are shared by organisational members. The study focused on eleven tertiary colleges, comparing the 'official' view of the colleges, as put forward by senior managers, with the perspectives of staff and students.

Tertiary colleges are responsible for all or most full and part time non-advanced education for the post-16 age group in the areas which they serve (some also have some advanced work). The colleges thus combine all provision which elsewhere is separately administered in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges.

The literature review draws on concepts from organisation theory, and discusses various models for analysing organisations and their goals: rational system and formal models, and three alternative approaches - political, ambiguity and subjective models. Rational system and formal models are dominant in the organisational literature. They focus on the official aspects of organisations rather than the perspectives of members. The review then explores the role of structure and culture in the pursuit of organisational goals, the extent to which organisations have a shared culture or ethos, and the factors contributing to successful change in educational institutions.

The study examined four main issues :

(1) To what extent are the goals set out by institutional leaders shared by other members of the organisation?

(2) How far do new structures influence perspectives and attitudes?

(3) To what extent are new types of organisation able to develop a distinctive culture and ethos?

(4) Are there major differences between individual organisations of the same type?

Evidence to explore these issues was gathered by means of: interviews with principals and vice-principals; analysis of college documents; and questionnaire surveys of staff and full and part-time students.

It was found that organisational members - staff and students - shared the official view of the colleges' goals and ethos to some extent. However, there were a number of mismatches and disparities between the official perspective and the views of members, and an 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989), between goals as ideals and goals as enacted. There was also evidence of cultural differentiation, rather than the integrationist culture portrayed by the principals. There were considerable subgroup differences in members' perspectives and in the extent to which they shared the goals and ethos of their colleges. There were also wide inter-college disparities in staff and student views.

The study indicates that organisational goals impact differentially on various member subgroups, and that organisations sharing similar purposes may achieve these purposes to widely differing degrees. The analysis suggests that formal and rational system models of organisations are inadequate for understanding organisational change. It is necessary to draw on alternative perspectives to interpret the 'competing realities' (Greenfield, 1973) and 'less-than-rational' (Hoyle, 1986) aspects of organisational life.

The study focused on internal aspects of the tertiary colleges, but there was evidence that external factors may have influenced their goals and development. The conclusion

therefore considers the broader policy context for the development of the tertiary colleges, as compared with other new types of organisation - City Technology Colleges and grant-maintained schools. It is suggested that 'new institutionalist' ideas, which portray the environment as having a central influence on organisational development, may provide a useful framework for reinterpreting the findings of the study. New institutionalist concepts provide an important corrective to the assumptions of rational system and formal models that organisations have a relatively high degree of autonomy in establishing and pursuing internally-generated goals.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to explore organizational innovation in education with reference to one particular type of organization - the tertiary college. The research sought to examine the extent to which the intended objectives for new educational organizations are realised in practice, and how far the goals and ethos which organizational leaders seek to promote are shared by organizational members. The study focused on eleven tertiary colleges, comparing the 'official' view of the colleges, as put forward by senior managers, with the perspectives of staff and students.

Tertiary colleges are responsible for all or most full and part time non-advanced education for the post-16 age group in the areas which they serve (some also have some advanced work). The colleges thus combine all provision which elsewhere is separately administered in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education (FE) colleges. Before discussing the purposes of the research in more detail, it is first necessary to explain the historical origins of the tertiary colleges and how they came into being.

1.1 Origins and development

The idea of combining academic and vocational post-compulsory provision can be traced to the Crowther Report (CACE, 1959). The report took for granted that there would be school sixth forms catering for academic courses and separate FE colleges for part time technical and craft courses. It discussed the merits of full time 16–18 provision of a 'practical nature' as an alternative to academic courses in sixth forms. Crowther suggested that some 'junior colleges' should be set up as an experiment. These would be post-school institutions, with an adult atmosphere, offering full time academic and vocational courses.

> *'What we have in mind is an institution with the adult atmosphere of a technical college but with a much wider curriculum and with terms of reference nearer to those of a school in that equal weight would be attached by staff to the subjects taught and the personal development of the students'* (CACE, 1959, p. 422).

The idea of a separate organization for all post-16 students was also put forward by Alexander (1969). He argued for a new 'tertiary' stage of education for all 16–19 year old students, operating under new regulations. Alexander suggested that tertiary colleges would have educational merits, in making more comprehensive provision than the divided system of academic and technical education, and would also have economic advantages, in enabling more efficient use of staff and resources than separate and often overlapping provision in school sixth forms and technical colleges. Mumford, a technical college principal (1965, 1970, 1977), was another early advocate of separate institutions for 16–19 year olds. He argued that 'junior colleges' would enable the comprehensive education principles of parity of esteem and equality of opportunity to be extended to the post-16 age group. Mumford also noted the economic benefits – the concentration of specialist staff and resources – and the more adult atmosphere which, he argued, would be more appropriate than the school sixth form for this age group.

While Crowther and Mumford both used the term 'junior college', Alexander's (1969) book seems to be the first document to introduce the name 'tertiary' college. The 'junior college' terminology carried on into the 1970s. For example, a proposal for a new college in SE Derbyshire circulated to schools, parents and the local community by the Derbyshire Education Committee in 1973 was headed *'Why was the Junior College considered? What are the Educational Advantages?'*. The leaflet went on to explain what the junior college was:

> *'It is important to make clear that a fundamental basis for the idea of the Junior College is that it would be neither a technical college nor a sixth form college, but*

a new type of institution, with its own distinctive character, catering for all post-16 work ...'.

Gradually, however, the term 'tertiary college' become more widely used, encouraged by the Tertiary College Panel, (later Association), a forum of tertiary college principals set up in 1976. The panel played an important part in disseminating information about tertiary colleges and providing advice to LEAs considering this form of organization.

An important practical factor that helped to pave the way for acceptance of tertiary colleges was the trend in the 1960s and early 1970s for increasing numbers of young people to choose to go to the local technical college, rather than stay on in the school sixth form. This period saw a considerable diversification in both sectors, especially FE, in types of 16–19 client and range of curricular offerings. The colleges developed an increasing range of A and O level GCE courses, especially in 'new' subjects not offered by traditional school sixth forms, e.g. sociology, law and accounting. A Schools Council (1970) survey of FE student attitudes found that students who opted for college tended to be those of lesser ability – not the academic 'high flyers' who tended to stay on in the sixth form; that many came to seek subjects not available in their school sixth forms; and that students valued the adult and less restrictive atmosphere of the FE college.

Circular 10/65

The government's policy initiative on the comprehensive reorganization of secondary schools provided a major stimulus to the establishment of the first sixth form and tertiary colleges. Circular 10/65 (DES, 1965) expressed *'the Government's declared objective to end selection at 11+ and to eliminate separatism in secondary education'*, and called on LEAs to submit plans for reorganization. The circular outlined six possible forms of reorganization, including the all-through 11–18 comprehensive school, which was described as the 'orthodox' model, *'the simplest and best solution'* if one were starting

with a clean slate. Although the circular was primarily concerned with the comprehensivization of compulsory schooling, one of the six alternative types of structure mentioned was 11–16 comprehensives with a sixth form college. Circular 10/65 invited experiments with this form of organization, but noted that authorities considering this option should consider the proposed relationship between the sixth form college and the local FE college and their respective functions, 'to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and to ensure that the best use is made of educational resources'. Circular 10/65 dealt with schools and did not consider the role of FE colleges in provision for 16–19 education. Authorities considering secondary reorganization in the light of the requirements of circular 10/65 gradually and then in increasing numbers began to include post-16 provision in reviewing their plans for reorganization. As well as educational factors (i.e. the needs of young people), economic, ideological and demographic issues (the latter increasingly so) were important. These are discussed below.

Soon after circular 10/65, sixth form colleges were set up in Luton, Scunthorpe and Southampton. This form of reorganization brought economies of scale, concentrating all sixth form provision in one institution, and also was able to gain support from some of those who were reluctant to accept comprehensive schools and the abolition of 11+ selection. From their perspective sixth form colleges could be seen as maintaining some of the traditions of the grammar school sixth form by another name at 16+. A number of the early sixth form colleges had a selective entry policy – Luton, for example, had a requirement of four GCE O levels.

Factors contributing to tertiary reorganization

Some authorities went further in rationalizing post-16 provision and set up tertiary colleges. The complex and interrelated factors that contributed to the establishment of these colleges are illustrated in the case of Exeter, the first tertiary college, which opened

in 1970. King (1976) describes the then Exeter LEA as *'mean, middle-class, Conservative'*, which had for many years ranked among the lowest nationally for expenditure on education. The authority started to consider the possibility of some form of reorganization in 1963, largely, according to King, on the basis of increased demand for grammar school type places rather than an acceptance of comprehensive education principles. Following circular 10/65, a working party proposed 11–16 comprehensives with a sixth form college based at the boys' grammar school – this two tier system, it was argued, would enable the most economic utilization of existing building stock. At the time in Exeter there were three boys', three girls' and one mixed modern schools, two single sex grammar schools and two direct grant grammar schools. The DES expressed reservations about the small form entry of the proposed 11–16 schools and the academic nature of the sixth form college. A later plan, rejected by the Exeter Education Committee, included the primary phase, with first and middle schools and 12–16 secondary schools as a way of increasing the form entry for the secondary schools. The director of education then suggested to the reorganization working party that Exeter Technical College, which had recently acquired new buildings, could be used as a centre for sixth form work. King notes that the origin of this idea is not clear, and suggests that it may have stemmed from informal discussions between the LEA and DES. If so, it represents a development of DES policy beyond the terms of circular 10/65.

Despite considerable opposition, particularly from the boys' grammar school and the local AMA (Assistant Masters Association) branch, the plan was accepted by the working party, the council and the Secretary of State. King argues that the acceptance of the plan by the Conservative majority in the council was based mainly on presumed costs which were argued to be reasonably low (although never actually calculated). The council continued to take up places at 11+ and 16+ at the two direct grant grammar schools, which had not been involved in the reorganization. Thus, as King points out, the council majority achieved the rare privilege of having their cake and eating it – they had reorganized, achieving as they thought economies of provision (though the new

scheme turned out to be much more expensive than expected), and retained their grammar schools. Other circumstantial factors also played a part in the acceptance of the scheme: in particular the imminent retirement of most of the secondary school heads. By 1974 only one of those in post at the time of reorganization discussions was still in post.

Plans for tertiary reorganization in North Devon were approved shortly after the Exeter scheme. Circumstances surrounding the North Devon plans provide a number of contrasts with those in Exeter. Devon LEA, in contrast to Exeter (they were separate authorities until local government reorganization in 1974), was among the more generous in its education spending, and had followed a policy of moving towards a system of comprehensive secondary schools since the early 1960s. The Devon Chief Education Officer (CEO) put forward a scheme for a comprehensive college to provide all post-16 education, based at the North Devon Technical College in Barnstaple, with the town's mixed grammar school and three nearby secondary modern schools forming 11–16 comprehensives. The scheme was approved by the Education Committee. King (1976) argues that members favoured the scheme as it would be financed from the FE budget, and they may not have been fully aware of the difference between having a sixth form unit at the college (as had been proposed earlier) and a comprehensive college with integration of academic and vocational provision. Although arguments about the economic use of resources were put forward, as in the Exeter scheme, the ideological justification of the scheme emerged much more strongly than in Exeter. The CEO argued for the extension of comprehensive education to the post-16 age group, for 'the seamless cloak' which was intended to symbolise continuity of educational provision both between academic and vocational areas, and between the feeder schools and college in terms of curricular continuity. While the three secondary modern schools supported the scheme, there was vociferous opposition from the grammar school head, staff and parents. Nonetheless, the scheme was approved by the county Education Committee and by the DES. Informal contact with DES officials may have had an important influence as in Exeter, as well as the approval of the Exeter scheme shortly before. Despite their

proximity in Exeter - with offices a mile apart - the two LEAs did not discuss their respective schemes during the planning phase. According to King (1976), *'at no time during the drawing up of the two very similar plans did consultation occur between the two sets of education officers'* (p. 140).

The Exeter and North Devon schemes illustrate various aspects of the setting up of tertiary colleges. They were established in an *ad hoc* and incremental way, on the initiative of individual LEAs – ideological and economic factors were as important as educational ones; much depended on local circumstances; in particular, the commitment of CEOs and officers, the buildings available, the attitudes and situations of local heads and staff, e.g. the relative lack of opposition where heads were coming up to retirement, as in Exeter. This 'disjointed incrementalism' (Lindblom, 1979) in the development of tertiary colleges contrasts with the central government initiatives that formed the basis for more recent new types of educational provision – City Technology Colleges and grant maintained schools. Both of these were brought about by legislation, with their organizational and financial arrangements clearly set out by central government. In the case of City Technology Colleges, quite specific examples of the proposed curriculum were included in the detailed prospectus issued by the DES to launch the colleges (see Whitty *et al.*, 1993).

By 1978 there were 15 established tertiary colleges with a number of others at the planning stage. There were clusters of colleges in the north west and south west of England, with a number of authorities elsewhere having one college, e.g. Hampshire, Derbyshire and Richmond, and one in Wales. The economic and demographic case for some form of post-16 rationalization was becoming stronger, and more LEAs considered their range of 16–19 provision, including those which had already carried out comprehensive reorganization and established 11–18 neighbourhood schools.

Pressures to rationalize 16-19 provision

We can distinguish a number of overlapping pressures that encouraged LEAs to conduct a review of their provision (Preedy, 1984).

(1) **Demographic factors.** The size of the 16–19 age cohort rose rapidly in the 1970s to reach a peak in 1982 and thereafter was due to fall by around 25% by 1993, with wide regional variations in the rate and extent of decline. The percentage reductions in numbers of 16 year olds from 1980–93 was expected to range from 22% in East Anglia to 38% in Greater London (DES/CLEA, 1981).

(2) **Economic and employment factors.** While the size of the age cohort rose, young people were disproportionately affected by unemployment and changing employment patterns. In 1973–4, 4.3% of 16–19 males were unemployed, and 2.7% of females; by 1981–2, these percentages had risen to 17.6% for males, and 15.8% for females (DES, 1983) despite the government's use on an increasing scale of special employment measures for young people, particularly the Youth Opportunities Programme and the Youth Training Scheme. Both industrialists and educationalists argued that there was a need to increase 16–19 participation rates in full time general and vocational education, in order to enable Britain to compete more effectively in manufacturing and commerce with other nations. The Manpower Services Commission (1982, p. 5) noted, *'Britain has one of the least trained workforces in the industrialised world'.* Thus, for example, in 1977, Britain had 42% of 16–19 year olds in full time general or vocational education, and 14% in apprenticeships. Corresponding figures for West Germany were 43% and 50% (MSC, 1980).

(3) **Small sixth forms.** A further factor influencing LEA decisions was the small and unviable size of many comprehensive school sixth forms. Many authorities

had adopted circular 10/65's 'orthodox' model and set up neighbourhood 11–18 schools. This meant that pre-existing secondary modern schools gained a sixth form – the number of sixth forms was rising as the size of the 16–19 age cohort reached a peak and started to fall. Small sixth forms with small teaching groups were very expensive to run in terms of staff and resources. A study of small sixth forms (Evans, 1981) identified a number of economy measures: combining first and second year A level groups for all/some classes; reducing the number of A level options offered; reducing the number of teaching hours per week, and increasing private study time. Nonetheless, sixth form teaching was often heavily subsidized at the expense of economies further down the school, e.g. larger teaching groups, reducing GCE O level options, etc. In 1978–9, 35.4% of all maintained schools had 50 or fewer sixth formers; another 29.5% had sixth forms of between 50 and 100 students (DES/CLEA, 1981). An HMI report on Inner London Education Authority schools showed that 35% of A level teaching groups across all secondary schools contained no more than four pupils (DES 1980). At the same time, there was considerable overlap and duplication of provision between sixth forms and FE colleges, with the latter offering GCEs at O and A level.

During the 1970s the DES, under both Conservative and Labour administrations, took a non-interventionist, laissez-faire approach to the establishment of tertiary colleges. Secretaries of State of both parties approved (or not) tertiary reorganization proposals, judging each case on its educational and economic merits within the context of the LEA concerned. The DES neither promoted nor discouraged tertiary colleges, and as far as government statistics (e.g. on examination results and staying on rates) were concerned, the colleges were 'invisible', being reported under the general heading of FE colleges.

By the late 1970s, this position had begun to change, under pressure from both educationalists and employers to develop a more co-ordinated approach to 16–19

provision in institutional and curricular terms, and better preparation for working life. In 1978-9, the DES issued a series of three consultative papers on 16–19 provision (DES, 1978, 1979a, 1979b), which mentioned tertiary colleges among other institutional alternatives. In 1980, the Macfarlane commission was appointed to report on education for this age group. The Macfarlane Report (DES/CLEA, 1981) was widely expected to come down firmly in favour of separate post-16 institutions (sixth form or tertiary colleges) for both educational and economic reasons. Leaks from the DES, reported in the educational press, indicated that earlier drafts did indeed favour the argument for a break at 16, but were amended in the face of strong opposition from the schools lobby both within the DES and other areas of government (see Jackson, 1981; Lambert, 1988). Thus, while the final report emphasized that *'the overwhelming majority of authorities must urgently consider the institutional basis of their [16–19] provision'*, it stopped short of recommending what form this institutional basis should take.

Sixth forms or 'a break at 16'?

The sixth form and all it stood for in terms of academic excellence, intellectual development, social responsibility and leadership of younger pupils had many strong supporters in the government and in the education service, many of them, of course, products of the grammar school sixth form. The much larger numbers of sixth form than tertiary colleges (by 1984, 112 and 30 respectively) was an indication of the pressures to preserve the tradition of the sixth form even if in changed form. In many areas the establishment of sixth form rather than tertiary colleges was a more acceptable policy alternative since, as noted earlier, schools interest groups (heads, staff unions and parents) could view sixth form colleges as preserving at least some of the ethos of the school sixth form, whereas a merger with the 'tech' was not viewed in the same light. Something of a victory for the sixth form protagonists came with the 'schools of proven worth' Circular 4/82 (DES, 1982) which established that the Secretary of State, in considering reorganization proposals, should take account of the position of *'schools*

which have proven their worth under existing arrangements'. A number of sixth form and tertiary college reorganization plans were rejected or modified on this basis. For example, Manchester's scheme for sixth form colleges and 11–16 schools had to be changed to a mixed system which included three 11–18 schools of 'proven worth' (the three schools concerned were those with the largest sixth forms in the authority). Similarly, Sheffield was required to amend its tertiary college proposals to incorporate the continuation of six 11–18 schools in the affluent south west area of the city.

Within the Conservative party, particularly its right wing, there was strong support for the traditional sixth form and opposition to a break at 16+. Thus, for example, Naylor (1981) in a Centre for Policy Studies document argues that sixth form colleges have serious disadvantages for the academic and personal development of young people, and that 11–16 schools have serious problems in attracting staff of quality. He then goes on to note that:

> *'our opposition [to tertiary colleges] is greater because such education would be conducted under FE regulations, ... and would in our opinion not be conducive to the kind of personal development that we think desirable (and is desired by the majority of parents). A further objection to the education of all 16–19 year olds being conducted under FE regulations is the politicization of student life that would almost inevitably occur under the influence of politically motivated student unions'* (p. 21).

Nonetheless, as the size of the age cohort began to fall, resources declined and the problems of small sixth forms became increasingly evident, a number of commentators were forecasting the imminent death of the sixth form. Rogers (1985) suggested that *'the school sixth form, for many, English education's most prized possession, looks on the way out'* (p. 13). He noted that if the increase in sixth form and tertiary colleges continued at its 1985 rate, all school sixth forms would disappear within 15 years. At

that time over half of English and Welsh LEAs already had one or more sixth form or tertiary colleges, or both, and one in four 16–19 students attended either a sixth form or tertiary college. As Rogers argued, the main move had become to tertiary rather than sixth form colleges – nine opened in 1984 and three in 1985. The main reason, he suggested, for authorities choosing the tertiary option was 'because it is seen as the most cost effective answer to falling rolls in education' (ibid).

The main teacher unions were also involved in the debate on 16–19 provision. For example, *After 16*, produced jointly by ACFHE/APTI (1975), argued for the widespread establishment of tertiary colleges. Such documents probably served to increase the resistance of those in the schools sector to what they saw as an FE take-over. Bodies in FE (NATFHE, ACFHE, ACP) in general supported separate post-16 institutions, and especially tertiary colleges.

The main school unions (i.e. NUT, AMMA, NAS/UWT, SHA, NAHT), not surprisingly, strongly favoured the continuation of 11–18 schools. However, the question of separate post-16 institutions placed the school unions, both nationally and locally, in something of a dilemma, since the interests of their members were considerably divided, and there was a risk of splits within these unions as increasing numbers of their members were relocated in separate post-16 organizations. Thus school staff who were largely concerned with sixth-form work and could therefore expect to transfer to a post-16 college would often be considerably better off (both financially and in terms of promotion prospects) in sixth-form colleges and especially in tertiary colleges (with the more generous terms and conditions and salary structures offered under FE regulations). Similarly, heads of 11–18 schools could stand to lose or gain by the introduction of separate post-16 institutions, depending on their abilities, qualifications and experience.

An indication that school and FE camps were drawing slightly closer together on this issue was provided by a joint NUT/NATFHE (1981) policy statement on 16–19

education and training, calling for a 'coherent and comprehensive system'. However, the document did not discuss the central issues: the institutional framework for provision, and whether sixth forms should continue. A NAHT (1982) paper similarly called for closer co-ordination of 16–19 provision nationally and locally, without tackling the question of how this was to be managed at institutional level.

At the 1983 general election none of the manifestos of the three main parties made any reference to tertiary colleges. Policy documents issued by the Liberal party and Socialist Education Association in 1985 both advocated tertiary colleges, arguing that only this form of organization would extend comprehensive education principles to the 16+ age group(Liberal Party, 1985; SEA, 1985). The SEA paper also expressed criticism of the Labour party for 'sitting on the fence', by expressing approval of the tertiary college option but at the same time accepting 11–18 schools as a continuing alternative. By the time of the 1987 general election all three main party manifestos mentioned tertiary colleges, though as Terry (1987, p. 48) points out, 'with varying degrees of equivocation'. Thus the Labour party pledged itself to '*spread the provision of a comprehensive, tertiary system of post-school education*', and the Liberal/SDP alliance planned to develop tertiary colleges '*where local conditions are appropriate*' (quoted in Terry, 1987, p. 48).

The Conservative manifesto failed to identify a preferred policy option but emphasized the importance of the sixth form, in advocating: *'the co-existence of a variety of schools - comprehensive, grammar, secondary modern, voluntary controlled and aided, sixth form and tertiary colleges - as well as the reasonable rights of schools to retain their sixth forms'* (ibid). Influential groups on the right wing of the Conservative party were critical of comprehensive education in general, describing comprehensive schools as unduly large, often ineffective, and pervaded by left wing ideology and curricular topics such as peace studies (see, e.g. Hillgate Group, 1987; Institute of Economic Affairs, 1988).

Educational interests within the Conservative party and the government were also increasingly concerned as the 1980s progressed to restrict the power of the LEAs. Maclure (1989) has described the deterioration in the relationships between central government and local government. As he points out, the so-called 'loony left' local authorities had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers in strengthening the government's determination to reduce the role of LEAs. The limitations on the functions of LEAs brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act (especially the opting out provisions and devolution of greater power and budgets to schools) had the effect of bringing to an end the trend to establish sixth form and tertiary colleges. Setting up a tertiary college entails reorganization of schools and FE institutions within an area creating 11/12–16 schools (or in cases where sixth form colleges already exist, merging these with FE colleges), with the LEA taking a strategic planning role. As Maclure (1989) points out, after the ERA it was no longer possible for the schools and colleges within an LEA to be treated as a system for planning purposes.

> *'The change in the distribution of power under the 1988 Act undermined the notion of a local or diocesan "system" of schools, and created instead a network of separate, semi-autonomous institutions maintained by local authorities or the central government. The same changes altered the planning function, substituting market concepts of demand for planners' analysis of need, and moving in the direction of a distribution of resources according to consumer choice instead of administrative discrimination'* (Maclure, 1989, p. xii).

1.2 The research study

Chronology of the study

The research on which this thesis is based was undertaken in two main stages: (1) 1979–85, and (2) 1995–7. Work on the study began in 1979. A literature review was

conducted, followed by the development of the research design and rationale, identifying the issues to be explored, the research questions, and the methodology to be used for the investigation. Having developed the broad framework for the study, the writer then made exploratory visits to the eleven tertiary colleges included in the study and their LEAs, to arrange access and negotiate arrangements for the fieldwork stage of the research. Pilot work on staff and student questionnaires was also undertaken with the help of a tertiary college not included in the main survey.

Fieldwork for the study took place in 1982–3. The researcher visited each of the eleven surveyed colleges to interview principals and vice principals and administer the staff and student questionnaires. Questionnaire data were then checked, edited and recoded as necessary, prior to entry for computer analysis, using SPSS, with the help of the Open University's Data Processing and Academic Computing Services departments. Computer analysis of the questionnaire data was conducted in 1984–5. The researcher then wrote up the first draft of the analysis of the staff survey and the full and part time student surveys.

The second and final phase of the study took place from 1995–7. This began with a thorough review of the work previously undertaken: the research design and rationale; the original literature review; the analysis of quantitative data from staff and student surveys; and qualitative data from senior staff interviews and documentary material, which had not been analysed in detail and written up.

The research design and purposes, and the research questions explored, were judged to be still appropriate and relevant. The study represented the only large scale and systematic investigation of tertiary colleges as an organizational innovation that had ever been conducted. The quantitative and qualitative data that had been collected provided useful insights into the process of organizational change.

However, returning to the study after a long period of time raised two main problems: (1) that the legislative and social context and the climate of ideas in which the tertiary colleges operated had changed very considerably since the study was designed; (2) at the same time, the educational management literature had also developed substantially, providing very different perspectives on organizational change and development than those current in the early 1980s. These two sets of changes had considerable implications for the writing up of the thesis. In particular, it was necessary to give careful consideration to: the *literature review*; the analysis and interpretation of both *quantitative* and *qualitative data*; and the *conclusions* to be drawn from the study. These three areas are considered in turn below.

The original *literature review* drew on organizational analyses and empirical studies of colleges which had been written prior to the early 1980s. Although the review incorporated ideas from Greenfield (1973) and Weick (1976), challenging traditional rational models of organizational change, many of the sources referred to took a relatively unproblematic view of organizational innovation, perceiving it as a reasonably systematic process of restructuring, followed by changed practice and attitudes. These studies also neglected the important issues of organizational mission, linked to strategic planning, and the role of cultural factors in educational innovation. It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s, first as a result of LEA strategic planning initiatives, and later in response to the planning imperatives on individual colleges stemming from incorporation in 1993, that serious attention was given to the development of mission in the FE sector (see Limb, 1992; Peeke, 1994; Drodge and Cooper, 1997). Similarly, the educational management literature gave little attention to this issue until the early 1990s. The role of culture and subcultures in organizational change was also under-emphasized. As late as 1994 Ainscow, *et al.* (1994, p. 9) described culture as 'the vital yet neglected dimension' in organizational development. Earlier studies tended to emphasize *structural* rather than *cultural* factors in organizational change.

It was judged by the writer that building notions of mission and culture into the analysis cast important new light on the findings of the tertiary college study. It was also felt important to draw on more recent work on educational innovation, for example Fullan (1991, 1993) and Louis and Miles (1990), which highlights the 'non-rational' and problematic aspects of implementing organizational change. It was therefore necessary to completely rewrite the literature review to incorporate these areas of work, thereby giving less attention to rational models of change (Scott, 1987), and more emphasis to the insights offered by cultural, phenomenological and ambiguity perspectives of organizational innovation.

Having recast the literature review, it was then necessary to revisit the draft analysis of *questionnaire data* and the planned analysis of *qualitative data*. Draft chapters on staff and full and part time students' attitudes towards their colleges were rewritten. The revised version gave greater attention to the issues raised in the paragraph above. Ideas in the literature relating to staff and student cultures and subcultures, the relationship between organizational structures and cultures and the 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between policy intentions and outcomes in practice were useful in interpreting the disparities between the views of principals, staff and students, and between different subgroups among both staff and students. The analysis and interpretation of the qualitative findings – principals' and vice principals' perspectives – also drew on these concepts, and on recent literature relating to organizational mission. This literature suggests that developing a shared mission as a basis for a unified corporate culture may be problematic in large and complex organizations such as FE colleges (Peeke, 1994; Drodge and Cooper, 1997).

Finally, it was necessary to review and recast the intended *conclusions* of the study. Conventionally, the final chapter of a research study summarizes the findings of the investigation in the light of the research intentions and questions, providing recommendations where appropriate. It does not usually include new analytical material

which has not been considered earlier in the report (Johnson, 1994). The study reported here includes a summary of the findings, reviewed in the light of the research purposes and questions. However, it was also judged important to include a *re-interpretation* of the results, revisiting them from a broader angle than that adopted in the original design. This re-interpretation enabled the researcher to contextualize the study from the perspective of the mid 1990s, taking into account the changes that have occured since the first phase of the research.

Three issues in particular needed to be addressed. Firstly there is a very different context for the development of tertiary colleges in the mid 1990s from that pertaining at the time when the research was planned. Although in the early and mid 1980s the widespread development of tertiary colleges was envisaged (see Rogers, 1985), the 1988 Education Reform Act brought the establishment of new tertiary colleges to a halt. The second issue (also stemming from the Education Reform Act) was the emergence of other new forms of organization – City Technology Colleges and grant maintained schools. It was important to examine, albeit briefly, the similarities and differences between these organizations and tertiary colleges, and the differing contextual circumstances influencing the development of different organizational forms for educational change.

The third theme that it was felt necessary to address was the impact of environmental factors on the development of the tertiary colleges in the 1980s and on the absence of new tertiary colleges in the 1990s. From a mid 1990s perspective, in a context where educational organizations are in competition for customers (Whitty, *et al.*, 1993), an important dimension of organizational analysis is the impact of contextual factors on the success and, indeed, the survival of organizations (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). The study therefore concludes with a brief retrospective review of the tertiary colleges from a new institutionalist perspective, viewing them from the 'outside in' rather than the 'inside out'. This perspective provides a useful framework for understanding and interpreting

various aspects of the development of the tertiary colleges and why this development came to a halt in the 1990s.

Rationale for the research

Although the 1988 Act checked the *further* development of tertiary colleges, some 60 colleges existing at the time of the Act continued to prosper. The tertiary colleges are worthy of study as they represent 'a new type of institution' (Janes, 1981, p. 11) which claims to extend the principles of comprehensive education to the post-16 age group. Like sixth form colleges, they are an LEA-initiated institutional form, created in response to local needs. In this respect they contrast with other new types of educational institution – grant maintained schools and City Technology Colleges - which were created by government fiat. Also in contrast to grant maintained schools and City Technology Colleges, the educational rationale for tertiary colleges was based on the argument that the needs of young people are best met by *co-operation* between sectors (by merging sixth forms and FE institutions and staff) and between institutions within an area, i.e. the colleges and their feeder 11/12–16 schools. The rationale for City Technology Colleges and grant maintained schools, on the other hand, is based on the notion that the interests of young people are best served by *competition* between schools. The ideology underpinning these forms of organization (and, indeed, the devolution of budgets to schools under LMS) was that the creation of new types of school and quasi-autonomous schools would widen parental choice and hence increase competition between schools, which would in turn act as an incentive to raise standards. School budgets, being based largely on pupil numbers, would directly reflect schools' success and popularity – so successful schools would attract more pupils and thrive, less successful schools would not.

Examining the tertiary colleges also provides interesting insights into the nature and process of organizational change and the extent to which creating a new type of

organization has an impact on the existing beliefs and attitudes of those who work within it. Do structures influence attitudes? How far can one create a new organizational ethos by merging staff from two very different traditions – school and FE? There are interesting parallels here with comprehensive reorganization, which sought to achieve goals for the secondary school sector similar to those of tertiary colleges for the post school sector.

At the time of the fieldwork for the study in 1982 there were 18 tertiary colleges, with a number of others at the planning stage. Various claims were made about the potential merits and disadvantages of tertiary colleges as compared with other forms of post-16 provision, but there was little empirical evidence on how the existing colleges were operating, what their objectives were, and how far the supposed strengths and drawbacks of this form of organization were borne out in practice. Given the very different ideologies and traditions of school sixth forms and FE colleges (see King, 1976; Reid and Filby, 1982), how far is it possible to bridge the academic/vocational divide among staff and students by merging the two forms of organization? It was argued by some of the colleges that a matrix structure, rather than the more traditional FE departmental system, is important to deal with this issue, to integrate full and part time academic and vocational areas of work. In particular, there was little available data on the perspectives of two major stakeholder groups – staff and students – about their experiences of working within a tertiary college.

The case for and against the colleges

The research sought to investigate how far the supposed advantages and disadvantages of tertiary colleges, particularly for students but also for staff, were evident to these groups. Were the claims for and against the tertiary colleges mere rhetoric, or were they realised in the attitudes and expectations of staff and students towards their colleges?

The research took place in the light of the debate among educationalists on the appropriate form(s) of institutional provision for the 16–19 age group. The main arguments made for and against tertiary colleges can be briefly summarized here under four main headings.

(1) **Ideological.** Tertiary colleges extend the comprehensive principles of equality of treatment and parity of esteem to the post-16 age group, spanning divisions between 'academic' and 'vocational' and full and part time students.

A contrary ideological perspective emphasized the educational and social value of the ethos of the 'all-through' 11-18 school, and the importance of allowing 16+ students to have a choice of institutions.

(2) **Educational**. The colleges provide flexibility for students to have individual programmes of study, tailored to their own needs, to choose a mix of academic and vocational subjects (e.g. BTEC plus A level), and to transfer between courses when necessary.

They offer a wider range of academic and vocational courses than is possible in other types of post-16 institution.

They are able to provide strong and effective systems of educational, vocational and personal guidance for students.

The elimination of competition for clients between schools and FE means that student guidance on course choice is likely to be more impartial and directed by student needs rather than institutional imperatives.

Against the colleges it was argued that:

The participation rate, especially among less able and less motivated students, may fall if students are required to change institutions at 16;

A break at 16 entails a loss of curricular and pastoral continuity.

Pastoral care and guidance, it was argued, may be less adequate in a relatively large institution where students spend only one or two years, than in a sixth form where staff and students know each other well.

A and O level teaching, and examination results may be less satisfactory than in institutions which focus on academic courses, i.e. sixth forms and sixth form colleges;

Tertiary colleges entail 11/12–16 schools which are claimed to have a number of disadvantages, e.g. lack of sixth form students as role models for younger children; less resources than 11-18 schools; experienced and qualified teachers, especially those who want A level teaching, may be drawn away from these schools.

(3) **Social.** The tertiary colleges provide an adult atmosphere which is valued by students.

They provide opportunities for social interaction between academic and vocational, and full and part time students, in social and extra-curricular activities.

Tertiary colleges can foster social integration among *all* students and staff, in contrast to other forms of provision where groups of students and staff are located in separate institutions. The colleges can thus help to break down attitudinal barriers between different groupings, thereby promoting greater parity of esteem and mutual understanding in society generally.

Against the colleges it was argued that they may be too large and impersonal for many 16 year olds, leading to problems of adjustment.

(4) **Economic.** Tertiary colleges provide economies of scale, avoiding duplication and overlap of provision, and enabling cost effectiveness in the deployment of teaching resources, buildings and equipment, by comparison with other post-16 alternatives. Hence, it was argued, they provided the most economic institutional means of responding to demographic changes in the 1980s.

On the other hand, establishing tertiary colleges usually entailed considerable capital expenditure.

College goals

The research therefore sought to test how far the rhetoric matched up with the reality, to what extent the colleges sought to meet these claims, and how far their goals were achieved from the perspectives of senior managers, staff and students. The approach adopted was influenced by ideas put forward by Julienne Ford (1969). Ford looked at comprehensive schooling in theory and practice, building up an ideal type model of the rationale underlying comprehensive reorganization, then tested this against practice in comprehensive schools. Ford was unable to find, in the literature or policy documents, a clearly worked out rationale for the links between comprehensive schooling and notions of social justice, equality, and the fairer society – these links were taken for granted, assumed rather than explicit. Ford therefore sought to build a theory of the effects of comprehensive schooling by drawing on a range of sources to build an ideal type. As she acknowledges, this approach is problematic since it does not conform to any one position or another, but is only a general representation of an amalgam of perspectives. *'It is like all ideal types, an imaginative reconstruction'* (p. 10), so using it as a yardstick to assess

how far comprehensive ideals are being realised is a difficult enterprise which begs a number of questions.

In the case of the research reported here, deriving a picture of the goals and ideals of the tertiary colleges, against which to compare actual practice, was in some ways an easier task. Although tertiary colleges, like comprehensive schools, had not 'unpacked' notions such as 'comprehensive' and 'parity of esteem' in much depth, the fact that the colleges had developed incrementally in diverse LEAs and that there were relatively few of them, in a context where other forms of provision (particularly 11–18 comprehensives, but also sixth form colleges) were the norm, meant that they had to think through their rationale for existence with some care. In some respects, tertiary colleges were 'wild' organizations in Carlson's (1975) terms, which had to provide a justification for their survival. This justification was expressed in college 'aims and organization' handbooks and publications by college principals and senior staff. Also, the fact that they were a relatively small group, visited by large numbers of officials, members, heads, etc. from other authorities considering reorganization, meant that the tertiary colleges were obliged to articulate their raison d'être in some detail. There was quite a lot of informal contact between the early colleges, later formalized in the Tertiary Colleges Panel, founded in 1976. This group of 15 colleges collaborated to produce a document (Janes and Miles, 1978) setting out the general aims and philosophy of the colleges – what would now be called a 'vision' or 'mission' statement. This document provided a basis for identifying the goals of the colleges; these goals were explored by means of interviews with principals and senior staff, and analysis of college documents. The extent to which the goals were being met from the viewpoint of organizational members was assessed by surveying staff and student perspectives on their colleges.

The following statements are taken from Janes and Miles (1978). The document noted that its account of the educational philosophy of the colleges was based on an account by one college but 'would be accepted by most' (p. 2).

'The tertiary college is a new institution ... [it] has the opportunity of developing its own distinctive ethos and new approaches in education.

The tertiary college is an institution organised on comprehensive lines. Therefore ... [it] should reject a ... classification of its students as 'academic' or 'vocational'.

It is our responsibility in the tertiary college so to organise our resources that we may as far as possible provide for each student ... an individual programme of studies, experiences and activities suited to his [or her] own level of attainments, ability, interests and career aspirations.

The tertiary college must be a caring institution ... Success in a tertiary college environment needs various kinds of guidance: guidance on curricular choices, careers, academic progress and personal tutoring. These are provided by trained and selected staff whose pastoral responsibilities receive strong organizational backing.

Standards of professionalism and civilised adult behaviour are a necessary feature of life in a (tertiary) college ... The task of the tertiary college is to ... enable its students to make a successful transition from school to the adult world.

The tertiary college has the responsibility of providing for young people an education relevant to the world of employment as well as to their own personal needs.

The tertiary college is ... unique in that it offers members of the teaching profession the opportunity of working with the full range of ability in the 16 plus age group (pp. 2, 3, 16, 17).

A further issue is the appropriate form of organization for the tertiary college. College principals saw structure not just as a technical matter of organization, but as an essential vehicle to give expression to their educational objectives. Given the very different traditions and ideologies of school sixth forms and FE colleges (see King, 1976), it was argued by some of the colleges that a matrix structure is important to achieve integration between full and part time, academic and vocational areas of work. Using a traditional FE departmental system, it was argued, would mean that ex-school staff joining the college would see themselves as being 'swallowed up by the tech', and ideological differences would be perpetuated between the two traditions and areas of work. Other colleges, on the contrary, opted for (an often modified) form of departmental organization. The Janes and Miles (1978) booklet, as a collaborative venture between the then 15 colleges, is careful not to suggest that one or other approach to organization structure is better, but merely describes both.

It was therefore important to assess how far the claims made about organization structure were borne out in practice. Were staff and students more likely to perceive colleges with matrix structures as integrated and cohesive communities? Was either form of structure associated with higher levels of staff and student satisfaction?

A related issue was the extent of similarity and difference between individual colleges. Studies of comprehensive school reorganization have found very wide differences between such organizations (see, e.g. Benn and Simon, 1970; Richardson, 1975; Kerckhoff *et al.*, 1996). As Richardson (1975) points out *'there is probably no school in existence that is fully comprehensive'* (p. 36) in that it provides for the full range of ability, socio-economic and class background. Similarly, Kerckhoff *et al.* (1996) note the disparities between comprehensive schools: *'what may have appeared to be a homogeneous new system was actually a highly diversified one'* (p. 271). Comprehensive schools co-exist with independent schools, and also their intakes vary widely according to the areas in which they are located, so a comprehensive in an affluent suburb will be

very different from one in a run-down city area. The 'comprehensiveness' of a school's students will also be influenced by a school's history and traditions, parents' perspectives, and choices on the basis of these. The concept of the 'comprehensiveness' of tertiary colleges is similarly problematic since the colleges co-exist with a range of other institutions. Indeed, even the definition of tertiary colleges adopted by the Tertiary Colleges Association is one to which a number of the colleges did not conform. The constitution of the Association described a tertiary college as *'the sole provider in its catchment area of post-16 education, other than that which may be found in separate establishments of higher or adult education'*. In acknowledgement of the fact that a number of colleges did not meet this criterion, a qualification was later added:

> *'Some colleges which do not necessarily meet the criterion of "sole provider", but are nevertheless associated with an 11–16 or 12–16 comprehensive system and are predominantly concerned with post-16 education other than higher education, may be deemed to be Tertiary Colleges for the purpose of membership of the Association.'* (quoted in Terry, 1987, p. 32).

Thus it is important to acknowledge that the tertiary college, like the comprehensive school, may be something of an ideal type, which in practice can take a variety of forms. It was therefore important to explore how far the colleges shared similar objectives, whether staff and students in different colleges held similar views about college life, and whether there was any major differences between individual colleges.

Research purposes and scope

In order to explore the ideas and issues discussed above, the following purposes were established for the research:

To examine organizational innovation in education, using tertiary colleges as an exemplar. More specifically:

(1) To assess the extent to which the goals set out by institutional leaders are shared by other members of the organization.

(2) To explore how far new structures influence perspectives and attitudes.

(3) To examine the extent to which new types of organization are able to develop a distinctive culture and ethos.

(4) To identify the extent to which there are differences between individual organizations of the same type.

The study focused on eleven tertiary colleges. Three main data collection methods were used: analysis of college documents, interviews with principals and vice principals, and questionnaire surveys of staff and full- and part-time students. Details of the methodology and research questions are discussed in Chapter 3.

Before turning to a review of the literature that informed this study, it is important to define the scope of the research and its limitations in coverage. It was not possible for a single researcher, with limited time and resources, to explore all aspects of the colleges' provision and development. It was therefore decided to focus on the colleges' provision for full and part time 16–19 year olds only. The adult and community provision of the colleges was felt to be beyond the scope of this research. 16–19 provision forms the core of the tertiary colleges' work, and providing *all* full and part time education for this age group is what distinguishes tertiary colleges from other institutions serving this group – school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and FE colleges. However, the impact of tertiary

reorganization on adult and community education is an important question, worthy of further study.

Similarly, it was not feasible to extend the research to a number of other important aspects of tertiary colleges: quantitative analysis of examination performance and age participation rates as compared with other types of institution; analysis of the economic arguments put forward for tertiary colleges – economies of scale, efficiency in use of resources, equipment, staff, etc. – again, in comparison with other types of institution. Another important issue not addressed by this research is the impact of tertiary colleges on the 11–16 schools with which they co-exist. How effective are 11–16 schools as compared with 11–18 schools? Each of these issues needs further research.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In developing and refining the purposes and analytical framework of the study it was necessary to explore various issues in the literature on organizations, and educational organizations in particular. The overarching theme of the study was organizational innovation in education, seeking to explore the official view of the tertiary colleges' goals, purposes and ethos as set out by organizational leaders, and how far this official view was shared by organization members - staff and students. It was therefore necessary to examine a number of inter-related aspects of organizations. First there is the question of organizational *goals*: what is the nature of goals and how are they defined and enacted in educational organizations? From the perspective of classical management theory, goals may be seen as relatively unproblematic - established by organizational leaders, and then implemented in a fairly straightforward way (Morgan, 1986). However, there may be problems in applying this perspective to large and complex organizations like colleges. Second there is the related issue of *mission*. A central task for leaders of new types of organization, such as the tertiary colleges, is to establish a core purpose and sense of direction and to ensure staff commitment to them. Again this may be problematic, especially where a new organization is formed by amalgamation, bringing together staff from different organizational traditions and cultures.

A third set of issues relates to the role of organizational structure and culture in the pursuit of organizational goals, and the extent to which organizations have a shared culture or ethos. How are organizational cultures formed and developed? A fourth theme, bringing together the issues outlined above is that of organizational change. What factors in the management of innovation help to promote staff commitment to a new organization? In addition to exploring these broad themes in the organizational literature as a framework for the study, it was also necessary to draw on two more specific areas of

writing: various publications focused on tertiary colleges and their development; and surveys of student attitudes towards various types of post 16 education.

2.2 Perspectives on organizational goals

The notion of organizational goals is a central idea in the literature on organizations (Hoyle, 1986). From a common sense point of view, all organizations must have goals, otherwise they would be quite literally purposeless. Goals in this context can be defined as desired purposes or objectives which organizational participants seek to achieve. As Scott (1987, p. 9) suggests: *'Most analysts have conceived of organizations as social structures.... to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals'*. Goals are thus seen as the *raison d'etre* of organizations; the rationale for their existence (Livingstone, 1974).

However, one's understanding of goals depends on the perspective or framework that one adopts for looking at and interpreting organizations. Each perspective tends to highlight certain features while neglecting others. Bolman and Deal (1991) therefore argue that there is a need to draw on a range of perspectives or 'frames', 'multiple vantage points' in order to fully understand organizations and the way they operate. As Baldridge *et al* (1978, p. 28) argue: *'the search for an all - encompassing model is simplistic, for no one model can delineate the intricacies of decision processes in complex organizations ...'*.

Various typologies have been developed for classifying the different perspectives or models for interpreting organizations (see Bush, 1995; Bolman and Deal, 1991; Cuthbert, 1984). Morgan (1986) proposes eight metaphors, which provide *'distinctive yet partial ways'* of viewing organizations; *'metaphor implies* a way of thinking *and* a way of seeing *that pervade how we understand organizations'* (p. 12). Similarly, Bush (1995) identifies six broad approaches for interpreting educational organizations. Of particular relevance in examining the official, stated goals of organizations are a group of

perspectives which Bush calls 'formal' models. These approaches emphasize the official and structural elements of organizations.

Formal models have the following main characteristics (Bush, 1995, pp. 28-9).

Schools and colleges are assumed to be goal-orientated, with official purposes which are determined by organizational leaders, and accepted and pursued by organizational members.

Managerial decisions are made through a rational process, where policy making is undertaken in a systematic and logical way.

Organizations are perceived as systems of interdependent subunits. Emphasis is given to the official *structures* of the organization, as represented in organization charts showing the formal pattern of relationships between subunits and senior management.

The organization is hierarchical and has clear lines of control and accountability between the various positions in the hierarchy, with the principal at the top, exercizing overall control and responsibility to the organization' sponsoring body.

This characterization of formal approaches has much in common with Morgan's (1986) metaphor of 'organizations as machines', operating in a systematic and logical way, and draws on elements of structural, bureaucratic and systems models of organizations. The 'rational system' perspective, discussed by Scott (1987) develops further the notion of organizational rationality. From this perspective, organizations are designed to achieve specified goals. They are 'rationally' structured in the sense of functional rationality, i.e. activities are organized to lead to pre-specified goals as efficiently as possible. Rationality refers not to the selection of goals but their implementation. Specific goals provide clear criteria for choosing from possible courses of action on the basis of rational

assessment, and choice of the preferred alternative which most closely matches organizational purposes. Thus information is gathered on a range of policy options, these options are evaluated in the light of organizational goals, and the most suitable is selected and implemented.

Rational system perspectives also emphasize the importance of a formalized structure. Decisions about structure are guided by organizational purposes. A formalized structure supports rational decision making by organizational members by dividing responsibilities among them, providing them with appropriate resources and information, and restricting the range of decisions they are required to make. Decisions are restricted because it is recognized that there are limits to the range of information and options that can be gathered and evaluated by individuals, hence the concept of 'bounded rationality' (March and Simon, 1958). Formal structures provide clear rules of behaviour and delineation of staff roles and responsibilities, thus reducing ambiguity. Organizational processes and procedures are standardized and consistent. This means that clear assumptions and expectations can be made about the consequences of particular forms of action, so that decisions can be planned and implemented in a systematic way with a reasonable certainty of the outcomes. The formal structure of roles can be portrayed diagramatically on an organization chart, and can be adapted as necessary to improve organizational performance. Structure is thus seen as a direct means to the achievement of organizational purposes.

Goals are often seen largely in terms of organizational output or products, e.g. in colleges the knowledge, skills, attitudes, examination results and future destinations of students. It is important to recognize that organizations have a range of other, often less clearly articulated goals. In addition to output goals, Gross (1969) identifies: *adaptation* goals - recruiting staff and students, obtaining resources and external recognition of the activities of the organization; *management* goals - administration, planning, prioritizing, dealing with conflict between departments or interest groups; *motivation* goals - ensuring that

staff and students are motivated in their work and support the institution; *positional* goals - establishing and maintaining the institution's position and status in relation to other organizations of the same type, improving its standing, and resisting internal and external pressures that may threaten its position. This would suggest that goals may be more complex than has been assumed above, and that there may be scope for debate on the priority of the various goals.

Colleges and schools exhibit a number of the features portrayed by formal and rational system models, at least to some degree, i.e. heads/principals with overall accountability, a broadly hierarchical structure with subunits and designated staff roles, and assumptions about the goal seeking and the rational nature of decision making (Bush, 1995). These perspectives provide a useful framework for conceptualizing the formal goals and structures of organizations. Indeed, they tend to dominate the way organizations are perceived, they are *'ingrained in our way of thinking about organization and in the way we read and evaluate organizational practice'* (Morgan, 1986, p. 33). These approaches provide a framework through which not just organizations but the world in general is perceived and interpreted. As Sergiovanni (1994) argues, the 'root metaphor' of educational institutions as formal, rational organizations is *'inescapable ... in a society dominated by technical rationality'* (p. 224).

Nonetheless, such approaches have been subject to extensive criticism. They provide only a partial and normative picture - portraying what ought to happen in a rational world, rather than what actually does happen in practice. Conceptual and empirical studies of organizations have cast doubt on the goal-seeking and rational nature of organizational life suggested by formal models. Hoyle (1986) refers to the 'organizational pathos' which, he argues, is endemic in educational institutions

> *'because they are incapable of achieving the goals which stakeholders and their own members set for them and because ... there is a chronic discrepancy between*

the "rational" model of organizations ... and the less-than-rational reality of life in organizations' (pp. 60-1).

This analysis suggests that alternative perspectives may be needed to interpret organizations and their goals. From a political perspective, organizations are seen as political arenas where interest groups centred around subunits pursue their own purposes rather than overall organizational objectives. In educational organizations, teachers' loyalties and interests may be attached to departments or other subunits rather than to the organization as a whole. Subject departments provide the basis for teachers' sense of identity and shared group interests (Ball, 1987). The head of department seeks to maintain and extend the department's status and power and hence its access to resources. Organizational decision making is thus characterized by conflict, with each department 'fighting its own corner', and policy emerges through a process of bargaining and negotiation, with the most powerful group or coalition achieving its preferred outcomes. From this point of view, organizational goals are multiple and contested, not a rational statement of organizational purposes, but rather a compromise between competing and conflicting interest groups. Goals are unstable and subject to change, representing the purposes of currently dominant groups or coalitions.

This perspective is of relevance to large and complex organizations such as colleges and secondary schools. Ball (1987) explores the micropolitics of secondary schools in terms of an ongoing struggle between departments in competition for status and curriculum resources - financial, staffing, timetable hours, accommodation and students. Core subject departments in his study occupied positions of greater status and prestige, and their power gave them greater political 'voice' and influence than other departments over organizational decisions. Political perspectives may also be particularly applicable to further education and tertiary colleges (Ebbutt and Brown, 1978). Until relatively recently with the introduction of FEFC planning requirements, heads of department in FE colleges have had considerable autonomy to pursue the separatist interests of their

own subunits through the expansion of courses and student numbers, with many colleges comprizing rather loosely linked federations of strong departments (Hall, 1994). The 1980s saw a considerable period of growth for FE colleges, centering round the entrepreneurial activities of heads of department. The salary grading structure, whereby staff salaries and allocation of promoted posts were linked to departmental size and levels of work, was a strong incentive to growth and the expansion of higher levels of work within subunits, leading to the pursuit of disparate goals by different areas of the college.

An alternative perspective on organizations which takes account of disparate goals and loosely linked subunits, is what has been called an 'ambiguity' model (Bush, 1995; Cuthbert, 1984). This approach was developed to explain organizational activities in universities and colleges (Cohen and March, 1974), which were argued to have the following characteristics: diverse and ambiguous goals, with no consensus on organizational priorities; unclear technology, i.e. no clear specification of how teaching and learning take place successfully; and fluid participation, in that different people take part in decision making at different times.

From this point of view, organizational decisions are not the outcome of a rational and systematic consideration of preferred outcomes but rather the result of a changing mix of problems, participants and solutions. 'Policy' represents an amalgam of disparate choices made for disparate reasons by different groups and individuals, with no overall rationale. Organizational goals are problematic and ambiguous. Different organizational members pursue different goals and give differing priorities to the same goals, depending on their current concerns and problems, rather than a long term view of overall organizational needs. It is argued by Turner (1977) that these ideas are particularly applicable to further education colleges. Colleges, he suggests, operate not as predictable goal-seeking entities, but as 'organised anarchies' within a turbulent environment. Internal and external circumstances are fluid and unpredictable, so rational, hierarchical models of

organization are inappropriate. Instead, it is argued, emphasis should be given to staff autonomy in decision making and flexible structures to ensure that the organization is responsive to constantly changing conditions.

Ambiguity approaches also suggest that complex educational organizations are characterized by fragmentation and loose-coupling. Weick (1976) argues that organizations comprise 'loosely coupled systems' of relatively autonomous subunits. Departments or other subgroups retain a high degree of independence and separateness from other units and the organization as a whole, enabling them to respond to circumstances that impinge specifically on them. Links between subgroups may be weak, infrequent and impermanent. Connections between intentions and outcomes, and means and ends, are also loosely coupled, accounting for the plurality and ambiguity of goals in educational organizations.

Ambiguity models provide useful insights on the operation of schools and colleges, highlighting elements of unpredictability and uncertainty in organizational goal - setting and decision making. However, they offer only a partial view, providing a corrective to rational perspectives, rather than an alternative understanding that can offer a complete picture of organizational life. As Hoyle (1986) suggests, schools and colleges probably have more rational than ambiguous features.

Another way of understanding the perspectives of organizational members on their life and work in colleges and schools is provided by subjective or phenomenological approaches. These perspectives also take a critical stance towards notions of formal goals and structures, emphasizing instead the centrality of the individual and his/her purposes and interpretations. Thus Greenfield (1973), an influential critic of traditional formal theories of organization, argued that structures and goals have no separate objective reality independent of people: *'We may better understand organizations if we conceive of them as being an invented reality ... Organizations are limited by and*

defined by human action' (p. 557). From this point of view, it make no sense to talk of organizational goals and purposes - only people can have goals. Thus organizations are social constructions or inventions; understanding them entails looking at the various *'meanings and purposes that individuals bring to organizations from the wider society'* (ibid., p. 559), based on their own experiences and beliefs. These objectives and meanings are unique to each individual, so there are wide differences in the ways that they conceptualize and interpret organizational activities and events. There are thus 'competing realities' about the organization and its purposes. The personal objectives of individual members may have little relationship to what are described as the official purposes of the organization. These official purposes, traditionally seen as organizational goals, are the personal aims of powerful individuals. (Here subjective approaches have similarities with the political perspective discussed above.) From this point of view, organizational structures are a result of social interaction, not fixed entities. Subjective perspectives are a useful corrective to the tendency to reify organizations as 'real' entities, having an existence independent of human agency. They also highlight the importance of considering individual interpretations and actions, as well as formal and structural aspects, in fully understanding organizations, particularly in managing change, as discussed later. These perspectives suggest that the official view of organizations put forward by their leaders may not be shared by members of the organization.

Subjective, political and ambiguity approaches provide useful critiques of an overly simplistic, consensus - and goal-orientated model of organizations, by pointing to the complexity of events and behaviours in organizations and their environments. However, they fail to account for the persistence and prevalence of the formal aspects of organizations, both in the work of theorists and in practice in colleges and schools. Thus, for example, the literature on organizational improvement and effectiveness stresses the importance of shared goals in successful organizations (see Reynolds *et al.*, 1994; NCE, 1996). Similarly, teachers in schools and colleges act on the basis of at least some

degree of shared purpose and agreed assumptions and patterns of meaning about roles, structures and decision making. While the rationality of organizations has probably been over- emphasized in the past, there is as yet no coherent and complete explanation of organizational behaviour and events to replace formal perspectives. Providing one bears in mind the caveats indicated by the alternative perspectives outlined above, the concept of goals remains a useful one for examining organizations. Indeed, many would argue that it is indispensable, since goal-seeking is a defining characteristic of organizations (Hoyle, 1986; Harling, 1984). As Perrow (1968) points out: *'We must examine the end or goal if we are to analyse organizational behaviour'* (p. 305). While it is important to remember that goals are not necessarily shared, the concept can be used to examine the official intentions of organizations, to compare organizations with similar purposes, and to assess the extent to which there is consensus about these intentions among organizational members.

2.3 Mission

Related to the concept of goals is the broader notion of 'mission', described by Hoyle (1986, p. 112), as the organization's *'distinctive or presumed to be distinctive cluster of goals with associated beliefs, attitudes and activities'*. Building a mission, providing a clear sense of purpose and direction, is particularly important for new organizations. Selznick (1957), quoted by Hoyle (1986), argues that organizations should have a mission, i.e. a set of general aims which it is the role of leadership to formulate and gain commitment to. This mission is broad and cannot be specified in detail, and will change in response to circumstances. Selznick distinguishes between organization (*'a rational instrument, engineered to do a job'*) and institution (*'a ... product of social needs and pressures – a responsive and adaptive organism'*). Thus 'institution' is the broader concept of social and group aspects including values, whereas, in Selznick's terms, organization is concerned with narrower and instrumental factors like administration. Mission relates to the institution and represents a balance between *'the internal state of*

the system, the strivings, inhibitions and competencies' that exist within the institution, and *'the external expectations that determine what must be sought or achieved if the institution is to survive'* (Selznick in Hoyle, 1986, p. 112).

Mission development thus entails identifying, articulating, and developing commitment to, a shared sense of the organization's fundamental *raison d'etre* and core purposes, and ensuring that these are understood by external groups as well as organizational members. It is suggested (Peeke, 1994) that a three-stage process is involved: (i) thinking about the fundamental goals of the organization and consulting stakeholders; (ii) producing a mission statement; (iii) implementing and operationalizing the mission so that all are committed to it, and decisions and actions are therefore consistent with the mission. Much of the literature treats mission as relatively unproblematic; see, for example, Limb's (1992) account of mission development as part of the strategic planning process in her own college. She notes that over a third of college staff actively participated in the formulation of the mission statement, which was based on a set of 'articulated and shared values' determined during a joint senior and middle management development programme. The Staff College/FEU (1994) guidance on strategic planning suggests that a mission constitutes *'a concise statement of the purposes and key features of the college, setting out the principles and values that will guide its development. The mission will indicate the college's long term vision of its future* ... (p. 14). The guidance then outlines five key questions to be asked when drawing up a mission statement, but makes no comment on possible difficulties that may be encountered. Weindling (1997) does acknowledge that the formulation of a mission is a 'very demanding' process, but suggests merely that 'several hours of discussion' may be needed to reach consensus (p. 230).

However, studies of mission building in educational organizations suggest that the process may be less straightforward. Peeke's (1994) study of mission development in further and higher education found that mission may have little impact on college

processes and culture, may fail to reflect key concerns of college members, and that teaching staff may have a very different concept of the mission from that of managers. On the basis of research in FE colleges, Drodge and Cooper (1997) identified three main problems in mission formation: establishing a single, meaningful common mission for a diverse professional group; staff suspicion of the process of mission development; and reluctance among staff to accept a centrally initiated mission. Similarly, Cowham's (1995) case study of the management of change at a large FE college found an 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between the college mission, as expressed in a strategic plan drawn up by the senior management team, and the perceptions of more junior staff who felt that they had been excluded from the process of developing the mission.

The notion of mission is subject to problems similar to those discussed above with reference to the related concept of goals. Mission establishment entails the identification of clear and agreed purposes, drawing on the assumptions of goal orientation and rationality, rooted in formal models of organization (Peeke, 1994). The process also entails the participation of organizational members, based on the assumption that consensus can be reached on organizational purposes. However, expectations about rationality and the possibility of consensus may be misplaced, particularly in relatively large and complex organizations such as colleges. As noted earlier, such organizations may be characterized by a plurality of interests and multiple and ambiguous goals. In this context, organizational mission is likely to be contested rather than agreed. Like goals, then, the concept of mission should be treated with caution. In particular, the mission put forward by organizational leaders cannot be assumed to gain the commitment of other participants.

2.4 Structure and culture

Another important set of themes for the study was the role of structure in achieving organizational goals, whether particular structures are more effective than others in pursuing goals, and the relationship between structure, culture and organizational purposes.

Organization structure

At the time when the study reported here was designed, structural aspects of organizations received considerable emphasis. The relationship between goals and structures was seen as relatively unproblematic. Thus designing new organizations was primarily concerned with establishing appropriate goals and developing organization structures to pursue these objectives. From a formal organizational perspective, structure provides a means for the achievement of goals. Organization structures constitute the formal pattern of roles and responsibilities for the tasks that have to be performed, and mechanisms for co-ordinating and controlling the work of groups and individuals. As suggested by rational system approaches discussed earlier, structures can be adjusted as necessary to meet organizational goals more effectively. Organizational structures also serve to integrate individual motivation, group norms and organizational requirements (Hoy and Miskel, 1991).

From this point of view, it is assumed that structure determines, or at least strongly influences individual attitudes and group norms, i.e. that people will 'fit into' and work effectively within the organizational requirements embodied in formal structures. However, alternative perspectives on organizations suggest that there may be difficulties with these assumptions. Structures and attitudes may be at odds for a number of reasons. Thus, for example, particularly in long-established organizations, there may be mismatches between structures designed for particular purposes, and new tasks and requirements, for which these structures are no longer appropriate. From a subjective or

political perspective, there may be differing interpretations and meanings attributed to structures, or they may be contested by interest groups seeking to change or bypass official organizational arrangements. In new organizations, members and groups may retain long-held attitudes and values and pursue their own goals which are at odds with the new context and structure. Informal structures may come to be more powerful than formal structures. There is also evidence to suggest that staff may see structural factors such as roles and responsibility patterns as 'dissatisfiers', rather than as vehicles for the achievement of organizational goals (Bradley and Silverleaf, 1979; Ebbutt and Brown, 1978). For these reasons it is important to question the extent to which structures serve as a means for the achievement of organizational purposes.

A related issue for the study was the appropriateness of particular *forms* of structure for achieving organizational goals. As noted in Chapter 1.2, the surveyed colleges had adopted two rather different forms of organization structure - matrix and departmental. Protagonists of each form argued that it provided the most effective means of achieving the tertiary colleges' goals. It was therefore important to examine the claims for and again the two types of structure. Most organization structures in educational institutions have strong elements of Weber's (1947) ideal type bureaucratic hierarchy, i.e.:

posts are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy;

each post has clearly defined responsibilities;

postholders are appointed on the basis of expertise;

salaries are graded according to rank in the hierarchy and there is a career ladder of progression up the hierarchy;

postholders are subject to clear rules and controls, each supervised by his/her immediate superior.

The structures of schools and colleges are perhaps more accurately characterized as 'professional bureaucracies' (Mintzberg, 1983) - i.e. they are broadly hierarchical, exhibiting the features outlined above, but have professional staff in senior management positions, and some opportunities for consultative and participative ways of working, with more scope for lateral communications than in a traditional bureaucratic hierarchy.

At the time of the study, and indeed more recently, the structure of most FE colleges, organized round a traditional departmental system, conformed broadly with the bureaucratic structure outlined above. Most colleges were 'strongly departmentalised' (Ebbutt and Brown, 1978), with departmental members responsible to the head of department, who in turn was accountable to the principal. As noted earlier, strong departments may give rise to political activity with entrepreneurial heads of department pursuing the sectional interests of their own areas - 'empire building' - rather than the needs of the college as a whole. On the other hand, this form of organization was seen to provide the advantages of clear lines of accountability, responsibility and communication (Ferguson, 1980).

During the 1970s and 1980s, though, many colleges, including four of the surveyed tertiary colleges, adopted an alternative matrix form of organization. A FESC (1989) survey of over three hundred FE colleges found that some 40% of them had either modified the departmental structure, or replaced it, or were in the process of review or change. Nearly one fifth had adopted a non-departmental, matrix structure. Tertiary colleges were more likely than other colleges to have abandoned a departmental system - less than half of the 36 tertiary colleges in the FESC survey had retained departments. Typically in a college matrix system, there are two separate sets of responsibility. The two arms of the matrix comprise: responsibilities for students and their courses on one

side, and teaching and resources on the other. Deans of study, with teams of tutors, oversee students' academic and pastoral needs and the provision of appropriate courses. Heads of subject-based teaching teams supervise the work of teachers and the staffing and resourcing of courses. Thus most staff are responsible to one manager as tutors, and to another for their teaching duties.

Matrix structures, it was claimed, provided greater flexibility than departments, enabling colleges to be more adaptable in responding to changing demands (FESC, 1989). They increase lateral communication and the delegation of accountability, giving greater responsibility to more staff, and facilitating a wider degree of participation in decision-making (Fidler, 1997). It has also been argued that matrix systems are more appropriate for innovative organizations, since they promote greater cross-unit collaboration; as Kanter (1983) suggests: *'a matrix organization ... is one way to accomplish organizational integrativeness that fosters innovation'* (p. 148). She argues that innovative organizations have elements of loose-coupling - looser boundaries between subunits, flexibility and more open communication, *'more freedom to walk around and across the organization'* (ibid). Kanter acknowledges that matrix systems are more complex than traditional hierarchies, *'but to produce innovation, more complexity is essential; more relationships, more sources of information, more angles on the problem'* (ibid).

It was argued by those tertiary colleges which adopted a matrix structure that a new form of organization was important, both to demonstrate that the colleges were a new type of organization, and to pursue their integrationist goals, breaking down barriers between academic and vocational work. To merely add departments to a pre-existing FE structure would, it was argued, perpetuate the existence of separatist approaches, attitudes, and use of resources. *'It was considered essential, therefore, that the new [tertiary] college should not be hampered by a structure which might encourage the continuation of earlier sectional attitudes'* (FESC, 1989, p. 121). A departmental system *'has a natural*

tendency to divide the college into separate and largely independent units, encouraging attitudes of competition and regard for growth, rather than attitudes of co-operation ...' (ibid, p. 126).

Ferguson (1980) summarizes some of the claimed advantages and disadvantages of hierarchical and matrix structures.

For a *traditional, hierarchical departmental structure* the advantages he lists include:

(a) that 'empire building' can and may give rise to excellence and can thus attract students and good staff;

(b) that identification with a discipline will produce professionalism with its attendant advantages;

(c) the inculcation of team spirit;

(d) clear lines of authority and communication.

The possible disadvantages include:

(a) potential problems of adjusting to changing demands;

(b) difficulties of developing inter-disciplinary work;

(c) a tendency to 'empire building', and problems of size differences between departments;

(d) over-identification with a subject discipline;

(e) demarcation disputes;

(f) problems caused by a difficult or inadequate head of department.

The advantages for an alternative *matrix structure* include:

(a) a structure clearly focused on student needs and course provision, rather than staff interests;

(b) minimization of problems in co-ordinating the work of subunits (departments), and less chance of conflict between college-wide and subunit goals;

(c) lateral communication facilitated;

(d) diminishing the consequences of 'bad' senior staff;

(e) possible reduction of 'empire building';

(f) allowance for great flexibility in course provision and staffing.

Some of the disadvantages of such a structure are said to be:

(a) both staff and students are responsible to two or more leaders with the problems this can cause;

(b) a lack of the feeling of identity and security that can come from membership of a department;

(c) the apparent structural complexity of matrix systems;

(d) problems due to the primacy of the course leader over the teaching team leader, resulting in frustration and conflict.

(Ferguson, 1980, pp. 567-8)

As Ferguson (1980) points out, the claims for and against each type of structure are not necessarily of equal importance, and empirical work is needed to test them in practice. Thus it is important to examine whether particular structures serve organizational goals more effectively than others. More broadly, the analysis of structures raises issues about the role of structure in pursuing organizational purposes and in shaping the attitudes of organizational members.

Organizational culture

Structural issues are important in looking at new types of organization, but it is also necessary to explore cultural issues, to assess how far such organizations are able to develop a distinctive culture and ethos which distinguishes them from similar organizations. A concern of the study reported here was to examine whether, as was claimed (see Chapter 1.2), the tertiary colleges had succeeded in establishing a tertiary 'ethos', from the perspectives of students and staff. While the intention of organizational restructuring was to develop new attitudes and a shared ethos, and the colleges surveyed had been established for some time, it was nonetheless possible that some traces of separate academic and vocational subcultures, formed in the pre-existing schools and FE college, had persisted, inhibiting the development of a new corporate culture.

While formal models of organization are useful in examining official goals and structures, they tend to de-emphasize group behaviours, norms and values (Scott, 1987). In order to understand staff and student attitudes towards the organization in which they work it is important to explore cultural perspectives. Culture has been described by Schein (1985) as the 'basic assumptions and beliefs *that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic "taken for granted" fashion an organization's view of itself*' (p. 6). Culture thus refers to the shared sets of values and meanings of organizational members. These shared values provide the underlying basis for consensus on organizational goals. Culture has both a normative and an interpretative function, i.e. it delineates the way in which organizational members are expected to behave, and provides a framework through which they understand events and actions (Blenkin *et al.*, 1992). Organizational cultures develop slowly over time, promoting a shared sense of organizational traditions, rituals and ceremonies that bind members together as a community. The 'organizational saga' (Clark, 1983), comprizing stories and myths about the history and development of the organization and its 'heroes' and 'heroines', helps to maintain a sense of belonging to a cohesive group.

There has been increasing recognition of the importance of culture in explaining organizational behaviour and events. While formal models stress the role of structure, it has become evidence that culture, *'the "normative glue" that holds the organization together'* (Morgan 1986, p. 135), is equally or more important in shaping attitudes and practice (Nias *et al.*, 1992). Structure does not determine culture, rather culture and structure interact, influencing each other in complex ways (Hargreaves, 1995). Structures alone do not create a sense of cohesion and shared identity among organizational members. What holds them together as a group is a sense of shared values. While developing new organizational structures is relatively easy, culture and ethos are slower to change, so establishing a new organization does not necessarily result in the rapid formation of a new ethos.

In exploring organizational 'culture' and 'ethos' in educational institutions it is important to distinguish between the two concepts. Rutter *et al.* (1979, p. 179) use the term 'ethos' in a broad sense: *'a particular ethos or set of values, attitudes and behaviours which [are] characteristic of the school as a whole'*. This is a very close to what Schein (1985) describes as 'culture' (see above). Torrington and Weightman (1993) suggest that culture usually denotes the values and norms of staff, whereas ethos also incorporates the norms and attitudes of students, and constitutes *'a more self-conscious expression of specific types of objective in relation to behaviour and values'* (p. 45). Glenn's (1994, p. 77) usage of culture is broadly similar to that of Schein: *'the invisible underpinnings ... tacit understandings ... unspoken norms'*. Like Torrington and Weightman (1993), Glenn describes ethos as a deliberate and articulated manifestation of the organization's underlying purposes and culture.

> *'What we mean by ethos implies a sharing that is consciously and deliberately sought, on the basis of articulated beliefs about the purpose of schooling;... an ethos is the result of deliberate consideration and decisions by [staff and] the school leadership'* (Glenn, 1994, p. 78)

The study reported here follows Glenn's usage in interpreting ethos as the consciously determined and expressed set of values, shared by students and staff, which an organization seeks to promote and which reflects its underlying culture. The study sought to explore the extent to which organizational leaders felt that the colleges had developed a distinctive 'tertiary' ethos, and how far this was shared by staff and students, as demonstrated by their attitudes towards their life and work in college.

So far, this analysis of culture and its manifestation in ethos has assumed that organizational culture is shared by organizational members, that it is homogeneous and unified, forming the basis for shared goals. However, this is not necessarily the case, and the perceived extent of cultural homogeneity in an organization depends upon the

viewpoint or 'cultural paradigm' (Meyerson and Martin, 1987) of the observer. Just as different organizational perspectives highlight some features of organizational life and neglect others, viewing culture from only one paradigm tends to cause 'blind spots', the omission of important elements of the situation. To gain a full understanding of culture, Meyerson and Martin (1987) argue, it is important, though difficult, to incorporate insights from three different paradigms or perspectives.

The first paradigm, 'integration', portrays the organization as relatively homogeneous, with culture acting as an integrating mechanism, the social and normative 'glue' bringing together disparate groups and individuals. This perspective suggests that the various cultural manifestations in the organization are broadly consistent, based on shared values and norms. There is an emphasis on consensus and agreed purposes among organizational members, and on the centrality of the leader as the main source for establishing and maintaining a common culture which pervades the organization. The second paradigm, 'differentiation', highlights the diversity and heterogeneity of organizations. This viewpoint, which has much in common with the political perspective discussed earlier, emphasizes that organizations comprise many subgroups and subunits, each with different and possibly conflicting goals and subcultures. Complex organizations reflect broader social cultures, so gender, ethnic, class and occupational status groupings may form the basis for subcultural activity. Thus an individual may be a member of several overlapping cultures. From this perspective, organizations are characterized by conflict and multiple cultures, rather than consensus and a monolithic culture. The third paradigm, ambiguity, draws on insights from the work of Cohen and March (1974) discussed earlier, and other theorists who have described organizations as anarchic, complex and paradoxical. From this point of view, there are no sets of shared values, only an acceptance of inconsistency and change; consensus and conflict co-exist. Consistency and shared values are considered to be abstractions, created by managers for the purpose of control. This paradigm may be appropriate for highly innovative

organizations where individuals are temporarily connected by shared concerns before moving on to form different connections as new projects are developed.

This typology of cultural paradigms echoes many of the themes discussed earlier in relation to organizational perspectives. Meyerson and Martin (1987) suggest that an integrationist and monolithic view of culture may be unduly simplistic, especially in large and complex organizations such as colleges. The third paradigm, ambiguity, offers useful insights on the anarchic and 'non-rational' aspects of organizational life, but may over-estimate the extent of unpredictability and uncertainty involved. Few empirical studies have been conducted drawing entirely or largely on this perspective, apart from Turner's (1977) work referred to above, and Bell's (1989) study of a school which was subject to rapid change, much of it beyond the school's control. Of particular relevance in exploring the extent to which tertiary colleges had developed a distinctive ethos are studies within the first paradigm which explore the role of organizational leaders in building culture, and insights from the second paradigm on group subcultures in educational organizations. Leadership studies are discussed below, and work on group subcultures is examined in the next subsection on 'Teacher subgroups'.

Most of the literature on organizational culture takes an integrationist or paradigm 1 perspective, and emphasizes the centrality of organizational leaders in shaping and developing culture (Beare *et al.*, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1987; Schein, 1985). Effective leaders have strong and clearly articulated values, and a clear perception of organizational purposes, and are able to gain the commitment of organizational members to these values and purposes, thus developing a strong core culture. Building a shared culture is seen as one of the most vital aspects of the leader's role. Indeed, Schein (1985, p. 2) suggests that *'the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture'*. Sergiovanni (1984) also emphasizes the culture-building aspects of leadership. He identifies a member of 'forces' or dimensions of effective leadership, including technical, human and educational concerns. Excellent leaders not only attend

to these concerns, but also develop higher-order symbolic and cultural leadership forces, which promote a strong sense of shared values and purposes among all organizational members. Empirical work on educational organizations tends to support this analysis. Thus for example Hopkins *et als'.* (1997) research on schools found that 'outstanding' headteachers' main concerns in school improvement activities were to impact on and develop school culture. Similarly, work by Campbell and Southworth (1992) on collaborative cultures suggests that heads were *'founders of their schools' culture'* (pp. 76-77).

In new organizations, the role of the leader in founding and building culture is particularly important, providing the basis for a clear sense of purpose and direction as the organization develops. One would therefore expect that the founding principals' vision and mission for the development of the tertiary colleges, and the values and norms they established, played an important part in the developing culture of the new organizations. In this respect the principals may resemble the founders of new business ventures discussed by Schein (1985). He suggests that organizational founders play a central role in the development of culture: *'culture [is] the result of entrepreneurial activities by company founders'* (1985, p. xi). Schein develops a framework for examining cultural development, relating it to stages in organizational evolution, with culture serving different functions at different stages. At the birth and early growth stage of the organization, the major cultural influence comes from the founder and her/his assumptions and personality. The main role of the founder is to transmit and embed a shared sense of the distinctive culture of the organization which then becomes *'the basis for member identity, and the psycho-social "glue" that holds the group together'* (1985, p. 273). The emphasis at this stage of the organization's development is on differentiating it from the environment, making culture explicit, using culture as a integrationary force and teaching it to newcomers. As the organization grows older, moving towards mid-life and maturity growth stages, and (usually) become larger and more complex, the cultural influence of the founder declines, and culture becomes a

battleground between competing views of the future of the organization. Dissonances develop between assumptions, structures and organizational culture, which in the early days of the organization were tightly-coupled and directly under the control of the founder.

Thus, as this analysis suggests, in new organizations the leader plays an important role in creating and developing a cohesive and integrating core culture. However, this rests on Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 1 assumption that organizational cultures are, or should be, monolithic. In order to explore how far new organizations are able to develop a coherent shared culture, it is important also to draw on insights from paradigm 2, which suggests that organizational culture is characterized by differentiation and diversity. This perspective is particularly useful for examining the views of organizational members. While leaders tend to perceive culture as unitary, shared and consistent, members are more likely to be aware of diverse values and subcultural groupings which may be at odds with the dominant culture promoted by the leader.

Teacher subgroups

In the case of tertiary colleges, establishing the new organization entailed bringing together staff from two very different organizational traditions - schools and colleges. The cultural norms and values of these two groups can be expected to be rather different, and may be hard to change, notwithstanding the establishment of new structures designed to integrate them, and efforts to build a new corporate culture. Tertiary reorganization also involved changing the role of the pre-existing FE college. As indicated earlier, departments, (especially in FE colleges where heads of department have considerable autonomy, but also in schools (Ball, 1987)), are often strong bases for political and subcultural activity, which may also tend to hinder the establishment of new corporate goals and values. Thus staff in the new colleges were differentiated, and hence likely to have subcultural affiliations, in two main ways: as ex-school or ex-FE staff and as ex-

members of school or college departments based on subjects, or broader areas of work. Given that cultures are slow to change, it was important to draw on ideas relating to teacher subcultures, to examine how far these two potential sources of subcultural activity were likely to impede the development of a tertiary culture and ethos.

Studies by King (1976), Gleeson and Mardle (1980) and Tipton (1973) were of particular relevance. Although they do not use the language of culture, they are essentially concerned with examining teacher subgroups, how they are differentiated, and the attitudes and values of these subgroups. King's (1976) work explores various types of institution providing for the 16–19 age group, with particular reference to the sets of ideas, or ideologies, used to defend and justify the different forms of organization. He looks at ideologies in relation to the interests of the groups that espouse them and to the social identities of group members. According to King, ideologies provide an overarching view of social experience which helps to integrate group members' conceptions of themselves and their social identities. The traditions and rituals of schools and colleges are expressions of their ideologies. Thus his characterization of 'ideology' is very close to what would often be defined as culture.

King (1976) identifies two broad ideologies used to provide the rationale of organizations serving the 16–19 age group: the sixth form as a community, and the college as an association. Drawing on ideas from Tonnies, Durkheim and Weber, he traces the values and approaches that shaped the historical development of the further education and the sixth form traditions in the British education system. King argues that in the course of the evolution of sixth forms and FE colleges, two very different ideologies have developed. The ideology of the sixth form, based on traditions stemming from English public schools, stresses the idea of a moral and social community based on shared beliefs and expressive values, where members of the community are closely involved in all aspects of the life of the group. In contrast, the FE tradition stresses ideas of voluntarism and consumerism, with an emphasis on instrumental

objectives. Group members associate for a particular purpose, but do not form a community based on shared values. King argues that these two ideologies underpin the rationale for sixth forms (and their variants – sixth form colleges and centres) and FE colleges respectively, as they operate today. These ideologies not only form the basis for the public justification of particular forms of organization by their members and other interest groups, but also, King argues, underpin the personal values and attitudes of group members – staff and students – and the culture and ethos of the organizations to which they belong.

In terms of King's (1976) analysis, the culture of the tertiary college, a hybrid spanning both traditions and sets of values, is somewhat problematic. King was not able to explore this issue as his study included only one tertiary college, which was recently established, and there were only a few tertiary colleges in existence at the time. Given that organizational ideologies develop over a period of time, it was rather too early to assess whether the tertiary college in his survey had succeeded in creating a synthesis, successfully fusing the sets of values and perspectives held by two groups with very different traditions.

While King's analysis may seem to overstate the contrast between community and associationist cultures, it is important to recognize that these are ideal types which do not reflect the actual position in any particular school or college. Individual organizations are likely to be somewhere on a continuum between the two positions, with school sixth forms located towards the community end of the continuum and FE colleges towards the other end. Nonetheless this one-dimensional framework may oversimplify the complexity and heterogeneity of culture within educational organizations, especially FE colleges (see Gleeson and Mardle, 1980, and Tipton, 1973, discussed below). Hargreaves' (1995) alternative typology of organizational cultures may be more appropriate, in suggesting that the expressive and instrumental dimensions noted by King (1976) are present, to differing degrees, within all educational organizations and

subunits. Hargreaves (1995) argues that an 'instrumental-social control' domain and an 'expressive-social cohesion' domain constitute the core of organizational culture. The two domains are always in potential tension, and each organization needs to achieve some combination of, and balance between, the cultural domain concerned with control and task achievement, and that concerned with expressive functions and social relationships.

Gleeson and Mardle's (1980) case study of 'Western' college of FE also throws light on the differing goals, cultures and perspectives that may co-exist within an organization. The authors explore the relationship between two contrasting departments at the college: one concerned with vocationally oriented courses, a department of mining, and one with general/academic provision, a liberal studies department. The authors suggest that the attitudes of staff in vocational departments in the college towards the liberal studies area reflected the uneasy relationship that existed between the competing interests of general education and vocational training. Because there was a nearby sixth form college providing GCE A level courses, Western specialized mainly in vocational courses, providing for large numbers of day release students from the mining and engineering industries. Gleeson and Mardle describe the college as having a *'technical ethos ... the primary objective of Western as an educational institution was to train young workers for their appropriate place in industry, and to equip them with the corresponding ... skills'* (p. 86).

The liberal studies department was also expected to subscribe to this objective. Within the department there were conflicting interpretations about the contribution of its work to the college as a whole. Liberal studies occupied a low status in the college, being seen by many staff as an unnecessary appendage to the main function of the college, i.e. equipping students with 'useful' work related skills. This perspective was also reflected in the attitudes of day release students and their employers who often viewed with suspicion the liberal studies elements of day release courses. Students tended to be

poorly motivated, lacking interest in the general and cultural areas of education provided by the liberal studies department, seeing these as having no relevance to their occupational roles.

Gleeson and Mardle (1980) argue that the low esteem of liberal studies in the eyes of both technical staff and students was rooted in shared social and industrial experience and an ideology stressing the culture of the workplace. Most of the technical staff had worked in industry and saw themselves and their students as having little in common with the 'academics' (mostly graduates) in the liberal studies department. As one technical lecturer commented:

> *'I think ... the liberal studies teachers fail, in some respects, to communicate with the lads, because they haven't got the same common ground we've got. I can relate things to my industrial experience, which is very relevant to what they are doing, and they will listen, because they think – this bloke ... is not just teaching me a load of rubbish that I don't need to know'* (p. 95).

Within the liberal studies department, Gleeson and Mardle (1980) identified different approaches by different groups of staff to what the role of liberal studies should be in a largely vocationally oriented curriculum and institution. The 'liberals', mainly older and longer serving staff, tended to accept the subordinate position of their area of work and so performed the servicing role to the technical departments without much question. Another group, of mainly younger staff, the 'radicals', sought to challenge the prevailing influences of the technical curriculum and ethos of the college. These staff tried to encourage students to question what they were taught, and more broadly to question the way in which they were being socialized for their occupational roles.

Nonetheless, Gleeson and Mardle argue, in the public face which it presented in interacting with other departments and the 'hierarchy' (senior management), liberal

studies was obliged to accommodate to the dominant technical culture of the college. The much larger proportion of vocational work in the college legitimized the more favourable status of the technical departments. This status and power was reinforced by the predominance of technical staff on college decision making bodies. In these circumstances, liberal studies staff had little hope of gaining wider understanding of their own less instrumental subculture which took a broader view of the role of education. Their marginal position meant that, in public at least, they were obliged to accommodate to the prevailing technical ethos of the college and justify their own work as contributing to this.

In examining staff perspectives, and the various subcultures and interest groups that may co-exist within one organization, Tipton's (1973) case study of a technical college is also relevant. She suggests that in contrast with other British educational institutions, FE college staff come from a great diversity of educational and occupation backgrounds. This, and the diversity of provision of the FE college, tend to militate against the development of a group identity among the college staff as a whole. In the college Tipton examined, staff tended to define their social identities and group allegiances in terms of departmental membership rather than college membership. Other sources of perceived group membership were graduate/non graduate status, and industrial experience or lack of it. Linked with the heterogeneity of staff backgrounds and group identities, Tipton notes the multiplicity of competing goals that staff saw the college as pursuing. The 'mission' of FE colleges has always been broad and diffuse, enabling them to respond flexibly to consumer demand. Within this broad mission there are diverse goals that co-exist. Members of the college that Tipton studied *'variously wanted the college to be an institution devoted to, or more devoted to, advanced work, low level work, industry oriented courses, general education, young school leavers and mature workers'* (p. 105).

Tipton (1973) suggests that one factor that the staff had in common was a tendency to use extrinsic characteristics of FE teaching, such as conditions of service and promotion opportunities, to explain why they had become FE teachers. Intrinsic factors, such as the wish to teach, or to perform a useful role in society, were not seen as important motivational factors. Tipton suggests that the college working conditions were not conducive to giving staff the opportunity to derive intrinsic satisfaction from their work, or to developing moral commitment to the teaching role, or to diminishing teachers' instrumental attitudes. Tipton argues that the mechanics of FE education make teaching more repetitive and monotonous, and staff-student relationships more superficial than in other type of educational organization. This analysis would seem to support King's (1976) concept of the 'college as association' ideology of FE.

These studies would tend to indicate that teacher subgroups are likely to be powerful sources of subcultural activity in large and heterogeneous new colleges. Even within an established college, staff are widely differentiated as Tipton (1973) suggests. The values, norms and world views of Gleeson and Mardles' (1980) contrasting departments are also widely different, reinforced by wider social influences such as the prior experience and training of members and the impact of work-place cultures on the attitudes of both staff and students. The gulf between King's (1976) cultures of association and community is perhaps rather starkly drawn. Nonetheless his analysis suggests that bringing FE and school staff together and expecting them develop a shared cohesive culture, as tertiary restructuring sought to do, might be difficult. Overall, these studies suggest that the culture of colleges may tend to be characterized by differentiation rather than integration; so building a new tertiary culture may be problematic, especially one which seeks to create a new synthesis by breaking down long established barriers and divisions between academic and vocational areas of work. As Maclure (1991) like King (1976), points out, these divisions are strongly engrained in the traditions and structures of the British education system and in public expectations.

2.5 Organizational change

While structural and cultural factors were important considerations for the tertiary colleges study, its central theme, drawing together these issues, was concerned with organizational innovation in education. How far do new organizations achieve the purposes initially intended for them; what factors are associated with successful organizational restructuring; and to what extent do organizational members and leaders share similar goals in the implementation and institutionalization of organizational change? It was therefore necessary to explore the factors which contribute to successful change, and to assess which of the organizational perspectives discussed earlier are useful in understanding innovation. As political and subjective models suggest, different groups and individuals may have different attitudes towards the change process. Also of relevance was the question of how long it takes for change to become embedded and institutionalized. The surveyed colleges had all existed for at least five years, so it might be expected that the changes brought about by tertiary reorganization had taken root and became established. If this was the case, organizational members would be likely to have a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the goals and ethos of the colleges, based on a shared 'tertiary' culture.

Restructuring the pre-existing schools and FE colleges to form a new tertiary organization entailed large-scale and radical changes for all those involved. Organizational restructuring is based largely on the premises of the rational system and formal approaches discussed earlier. It is assumed that creating new structures will result in changes in attitudes, practices and outcomes. Thus, for example, comprehensive reorganization in the UK was expected to lead to a levelling out of disparities between secondary schools, and the opportunity for students of all social classes and attainment levels to reach their full potential (Kerckhoff *et al.*, 1996). Similarly, large scale school restructuring programmes in the USA during the 1980s and early 1990s were expected to

lead to significant improvements in school performance. In both cases, the results were rather more limited than reformers had hoped (Abraham, 1995; Crowson *et al.*, 1995).

From the perspective of formal and rational system models, the process of change, whether it is large scale or more restricted, can be tackled in a systematic way, by: reviewing the existing situation, planning the innovation, implementing it, and finally assessing the outcomes. Such an approach is explicit or implicit in much of the literature on managing planned change in education. Thus, for example, the widely-used DES (1989) model for school development planning, suggests that SDPs provide a strategy for *'managing development and change to make the school more effective'* (p. 4). A four-stage process is recommended: auditing the school's strengths and weaknesses; constructing a plan which identifies priorities for change; implementing these priorities; and finally an evaluation stage where the success of implementation is reviewed. The Further Education Funding Council's framework for strategic planning in colleges takes a similar, rationally-based, step-by-step approach (FEFC, 1992).

However, this model of the change process may give rise to problems, especially in cases of large-scale innovation, where change is planned at one level of the education system (e.g. DES/DfEE or LEA) and implemented at another level (e.g. within schools or colleges). In the case of the tertiary colleges, reorganization was planned by LEAs, with DES approval, and implemented by staff in the newly constituted colleges, who had little or no involvement in planning the restructuring of the schools and college concerned. There may be mismatches between the intentions of policy makers and what happens as the policy is implemented. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) distinguish between 'policy as formulated' and 'policy as practised'. In looking at the impact of externally initiated change, such as the 1988 Education Reform Act, on educational organizations, Becher (1989) describes an 'implementation gap' between the policy expectations as set out in legislation, and what is actually put into practice in schools and colleges. Policy makers do not operate in isolation; what happens when their plans are enacted in educational

organizations *'depends crucially on those who have to carry them out'* (Becher, 1989, p. 56).

According to Wise (1977), policy makers indulge in 'hyper-rationalization' and 'wishful thinking' in assuming that their plans will be implemented.

> *'When policy makers require by law that schools achieve a goal which in the past they have not achieved, they may be engaged in wishful thinking, [i.e. they] behave as though their desires concerning what a school system should accomplish, will in fact be accomplished if the policy makers simply decree it'* (Wise, 1977, p. 5).

Similarly, Fullan (1989) describes the assumption that there is a clear and logical relationship between plans and implementation as 'brute sanity' or the fallacy of rationalism. Brute sanity constitutes the natural tendency of planners to focus on an overview of the long-term goals and intentions of change, ignoring the ambiguity, complexity and detailed processes of actually putting it into place.

There is thus a need for the management of change to take into account the 'less than rational' aspects of organizations (Hoyle, 1986). Patterson *et al.*, (1986) provide a critique of rational approaches to innovation in educational organizations, suggesting that such approaches make incorrect assumptions about goals, power, decision-making, the external environment, and teaching. The 'non-rational' approach to change which they propose is, they argue, based on a realistic and practical understanding of what actually happens in educational organizations. From this perspective: there are multiple and often competing organizational goals; power to make things happen is located throughout the organization and is not the preserve of those holding formal authority at the top of the hierarchy; the rationality of decision-making is very limited - the process includes compromise and concessions, resulting in decisions that are not the most sound educationally; environmental factors have a strong impact on organizational events and

decisions; organizational goals and policies bear little relationships to what actually happens in the classroom.

This analysis suggests the applicability of political and ambiguity perspectives to the change process. Large-scale change involves alterations in existing structures, roles and ways of working, and hence entails instability, uncertainty, and conflict. Radical innovations engender feelings of loss and lack of control over the content and pace of change, which may be similar to feelings experienced in bereavement (Marris, 1974). Political activity is likely to occur, as groups and individuals involved in organizational change attempt to defend and extend their own interests. In recognition of the non-rational aspects of the change process, Davies and Morgan (1983) suggest that large-scale change is likely to take place in a number of stages, and that different organizational perspectives are appropriate for understanding each stage. Initially there is an ambiguity phase, characterized by uncertainty and ambivalence as those involved seek to discover how the change will affect them. This is followed by a political phase of inter-group conflict as each group seeks to maximize the benefits of the innovation to its own members. There is then a legitimization phase, characterized by increasing consensus, as policy and implementation issues are negotiated and agreed. The final phase is a process of bureaucratization as the innovation is institutionalized and becomes part of the organization's taken-for-granted routine.

From this point of view, large-scale change is likely to be a complex and long-term process, taking many years to become embedded. Early stages are characterized by non-rational elements, and it is only later on that consensus, clarity of purpose and other features emphasized by formal models become apparent. Radical change, requiring alterations in peoples' perceptions and attitudes does not happen quickly: *'Five years is absolute par for the course of changing attitudes and even that is only achievable if one is moving well within the establishment grain of thinking'* (Harvey-Jones, 1988, p. 114). Similarly Fullan (1991) argues that major change is a long-term project: small-scale

innovations take a minimum of two or three years; large-scale organizational reforms are likely to take five years or more to become fully established and accepted.

Change may be particularly problematic where it entails the establishment of a new type of organization with a distinctive culture and ethos. As discussed earlier, culture is embedded in organizational traditions and professional socialization, and is slow to change. Fullan (1988) suggests that, while materials and practices may be relatively easy to alter, alterations in values and beliefs, which are necessary for fundamental and lasting cultural change, are much more difficult to achieve. Thus placing teachers in a new type of organization does not necessarily mean that their fundamental attitudes will change quickly, enabling the development of a new culture. Indeed, there is much evidence to suggest that teachers ignore change or adapt it to fit in with their own preconceptions, or pay lip service to it without altering their beliefs or their classroom practice (Rudduck, 1986), the frequently noted problem of 'innovation without change'. Cuban (1990) distinguishes between 'first order' and 'second order' changes. First order changes affect the surface features of educational organizations - e.g. teaching materials - in making what already exists more efficient and more effective. Second order changes are concerned with the deeper culture and structure of the organization - e.g. the formulation of a new mission - *'and seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together'* (Cuban, 1990, p. 73).

To achieve second order change, Fullan (1991, 1993) argues that it is important to focus on the often neglected implementation stage. It is only by putting innovations into practice and working through them that people are able to negotiate and clarify, individually and collectively, the meaning of the change. Taking a broadly subjective perspective, Fullan (1991) argues that any significant innovation, if it is to produce sustained change, requires the individuals concerned to work out their own meanings and interpretations. Real change entails ambiguity, ambivalence and conflict, arising from the multiple realities of those involved, as they work through the implementation

process, as Davies and Morgan's (1983) model of the change process also suggests. A study of collaborative development in primary schools also notes the importance of conflict in the change process. Nias *et al.* (1992) found that teachers changed their attitudes and practices in the process of working together, but had to work through disagreements and differences for this to take place. Change attempts, Fullan (1991, p. 112) suggests, frequently fail because of the tendency to focus on the goals of change, rather than seeking to understand the central importance of 'meaning' for those who are implementing the change, which entails *'entering the conflict-filled, ambiguous, anxious world of seeing what others think of the idea'*.

In order for teachers to attain ownership of, and commitment to, change it is important to develop staff collaboration and involvement in decision making (Nias *et al.*, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Louis and Miles, 1990). This entails empowering staff to contribute their experience and expertise to organizational development, ensuring that they have access to support, information and resources, and are able to work together in participative problem-solving teams. As Patterson *et al.* (1986, p. 109) point out: teachers *'naturally have a greater investment in and commitment to those decisions they have participated in making'*. Developing collaborative working teams helps to promote initiative-taking, and, by reducing the professional isolation of teachers, enables them to learn from each other (Little, 1990). Working in co-operative teams does not necessarily mean consensus: *'tension is part of collaborative working'* (Nias *et al.*, 1992, p. 153). Instead, it entails an openness and sense of trust in colleagues, where people feel free to express dissent and disagreement. A shared sense of purpose and commitment - a collaborative culture - emerges during the process of working through change, rather that being present at the beginning of the process, as suggested by rational approaches. Ownership of change thus develops gradually, especially where the innovation has been initiated from outside the organization, rather than planned by those who have to put it into practice (Huberman and Miles, 1984).

Much empirical work on organizational improvement points to the importance of participation and a collaborative culture in facilitating effective change and development. Thus, for example, Mortimore *et al.* (1988) found that the involvement of teachers in decision making was a key factors in successful schools. Teachers were consulted about matters of overall school policy, such as spending decisions, as well as about issues that affected them directly, such as curriculum guidelines and the allocation of teachers to classes. The National Commission on Education (NCE, 1996) collection of case studies of successful schools in disadvantaged areas notes that the schools had participatory processes, in which individuals and teams of staff were able to contribute to the development of common and agreed approaches to teaching and learning. The gradual emergence of ideas through participative decisions fostered the collective development of a shared culture and ethos. Work on school improvement by Hopkins *et al.* (1997) similarly suggests that successful educational change involves collaborative ways of working which include individuals and groups at all levels of the school. In schools which are effectively managing change, there are close links and mutual support between the senior team, departments and individual teachers, working together on collectively agreed improvement activities.

However, while staff participation and collaborative cultures seem to be key factors in effective change, there is evidence that teachers do not want to be involved in all aspects of decision making. It is suggested by Dennison and Shenton (1987) that maximizing the opportunities for staff to participate in decisions may be wasted effort. Senior staff may have perceptions of teachers' needs for involvement that are very different from those of the teachers themselves, and staff willingness to take part in decision-making may vary considerably, depending on the issues involved, career stage, motivation, interpretations of the purposes of seeking their involvement, and other factors. Weston (1979) also notes the reluctance of staff to take part in decision - making, because they felt that their impact on the outcomes would be limited, and also that more senior staff were paid to take decisions.

Conway's (1980) study provides useful evidence of teachers' perceived and preferred levels of decision involvement. In a survey of staff participation in various areas of school management, he identified three main clusters of decision areas. In the first area – those decisions relating closely to the classroom and teaching issues – staff saw themselves as highly involved in decisions, and desired levels of involvement were also high. Thus there was a close match between actual and desired involvement. In the second cluster, largely concerned with administrative decisions, actual involvement and desired involvement were both low, i.e. there was again congruence between the extent to which staff were involved and wanted to be so. In the third cluster there were quite substantial areas of mismatch between actual and desired levels of participation. This cluster included important policy areas: appointment of staff, building plans, budget preparation and teaching timetables. In each of these areas, perceived levels of participation were lower than desired levels. Conway's study highlights the need to take into account desired, as well as actual levels of participation. Desired levels may vary according to the perceived relevance and importance of the management issues concerned. As he suggests, there is a need to avoid wide disparities between actual and desired levels, since these discrepancies are likely to lead to staff dissatisfaction, rather than shared commitment to organizational decisions and the facilitation of effective change. Hence in examining staff attitudes towards the tertiary colleges, while high levels of perceived decision involvement would seem to be important in promoting staff commitment to organizational purposes, it is also necessary to take into account both *actual* and *desired* levels of involvement and possible disparities between them.

As discussed earlier, the related issue of collaborative working also seems to be important in promoting staff commitment to organizational goals. The question of collaborative cultures is especially relevant to tertiary colleges, as one of their major purposes was to foster co-operation and integration between two previously separated areas of work, staff and students, building a shared culture and ethos. However, notions of collaborative cultures have been subject to some criticism. Thus cohesive working

groups may operate as 'cosy self-referencing clubs' (Campbell and Southworth, 1992, p. 64), promoting complacency and the maintenance of established ways of doing things, and acting as centres of resistance to development and change. From a political perspective, collaborative working groups, often based in departments, may lead to a 'balkanised' (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992) organizational culture, where teachers' identities, loyalties and efforts are attached to their own specific working groups rather than the school or college as a whole. This may be a particular problem in larger organizations, and was evident in Gleeson and Mardle's (1980) contrasting departments. Collaboration may also be imposed by senior managers on a reluctant staff, a phenomenon which Hargreaves (1992) calls 'contrived collegiality'. This is characterized by a set of formal procedures and arrangements which *require* teachers to work together. As Hargreaves (1992) suggests, this form of collaborative working may be more conducive to administrative control than the empowerment of teachers.

Thus despite the arguments that have been put forward about the importance of collaboration in promoting organizational development and change, it would seem that it is not collaboration *per se* that is important, but the purposes which is serves. So in looking at how far new organizations are successful in building a shared corporate culture and sense of identity among their members, collaborative ways of working may contribute to these purposes by enhancing staff commitment to, and ownership of, the change process involved in developing the organization. However from a paradigm 2 view of culture (Meyerson and Martin, 1987), collaborative subcultures may act as centres of resistance to change and the promotion of sectional interests, rather than the development of a new organization-wide integrationist culture. Given that cultures are slow to change, subcultural groupings based on the norms and values of pre-existing institutions may persist, despite the creation of new organizational structures. It is therefore important to assess whether members of new organizations perceive the continuation of pre-existing subcultural groups, or feel that these have been superseded

by a distinctive new culture and ethos - i.e. whether they perceive the culture of their own organization in paradigm 1 or paradigm 2 terms.

As Hargreaves (1995) points out, the relationship between culture and organizational change is problematic: culture may be a *cause*, an *object* or an *effect* of change (p. 41). Thus for example, Nias *et al.* (1992) argue that a collaborative culture is a pre-requisite for effective organizational change - i.e. a cause. Others suggest that the purpose of change efforts is to change organizational culture (Fullan, 1991; Hopkins *et al.*, 1997), i.e. that innovation influences and leads to alterations in culture. Organizational restructuring is based on the premise that culture is the object and effect of change. That is, it is assumed that reorganization will impact on the differing existing subgroup norms and values of those involved, leading to the development of a new corporate culture which binds these subgroups together. A key issue in examining the tertiary colleges was how far these processes had taken place, or, as the position taken by Nias *et al.* (1992) would indicate, whether there were difficulties in constructing an integrationist culture in a new organization which brought together disparate subgroups.

2.6 Material on tertiary colleges

Another area of literature relevant to the study was material focused on the tertiary colleges specifically. Much of the literature on the colleges consists of articles and collections of case studies of individual colleges and various aspects of management within them – organization, staffing, curriculum, pastoral care, resource management and issues in managing newly-reorganized colleges. This material, nearly all written by college principals and senior staff, is largely a-theoretical and descriptive, explaining policy and practice. It tends to be based on broadly formal or rational system approaches to designing new organizations, and may understate the problems involved, since it presents the 'public face' of the tertiary colleges from the viewpoint of their senior managers. Thus, for example, *Going Tertiary* (Janes *et al.*, 1985), a collection of essays

on various areas of college management, is described by its editors as intended to help those who are considering tertiary reorganization, by presenting the views of various members of the Tertiary Colleges Association and their associated partner schools, based on their own experience and practice.

Such material raises a number of points of relevance to the present study. First, it is suggested that it is important for tertiary colleges to be 'designed from first principles' rather than merely combining existing school sixth forms and FE colleges. The tertiary college should be an entirely new organization, based on comprehensive principles, which brings together previously separated areas of work, staff and students in a 'tertiary synthesis' (Ballard, 1985). The college is seen as having a radical role in breaking down traditional barriers between academic and vocational areas of study, and the attitudinal divisions linked with them. In order to make it clear that the tertiary college is a distinctive new organization, Terry (1987), a tertiary college principal, suggests that it is important to formally close the former FE college, and to found the new institution with a new name and a completely new management structure and organization of teaching sections. This is important not just to avoid the impression of an FE takeover, but if the pre-existing college is not dismantled, in name and structure, it will continue to have a *de facto* existence and inhibit new developments. However, Terry does not acknowledge that the use of existing FE buildings, in most cases, is a problem here, tending to promote an image of the continuation of 'the tech', in the eyes of parents and the public, if not those of staff.

A related theme in this material is the comprehensive nature of the tertiary colleges and the suggestion that they promote parity of esteem and social integration in a way that is not possible in other types of 16-19 institution which do not provide for the full range of the age group under one roof. Austin (1982), for example, claims that the colleges can combine the best features of sixth forms and FE colleges in one organization. Terry (1987), similarly argues that tertiary colleges are the only truly comprehensive form of

16–19 education institution. Making no claims to be dispassionate or objective, he argues that the colleges combine the strengths of academic achievement and pastoral care of schools with the adult atmosphere and vocational range of FE colleges. Drawing on experience in his own college, he explores the arguments for and against school sixth forms and sixth form colleges in comparison with those for and against tertiary colleges, and suggests that in many areas the tertiary option may be the most appropriate form of provision. Like other tertiary college principals, he is careful not to claim that this form of organization should necessarily be adopted immediately by all LEAs. It is, however, claimed that *'this pattern of reorganization is desirable because it produces improved educational opportunities'* (Janes *et al.*, 1985, 'Foreword', p. 2). Contributors to the Janes *et al.* (1985) volume also emphasize the diversity of the tertiary college, evolving in response to local demands and needs, not based on a blueprint of what this type of institution should be.

Another major theme in the literature dealing specifically with tertiary colleges is the question of appropriate organization structures. Clearly the issue of whether or not to adopt a matrix structure was a major organizational concern for tertiary colleges in the 1980s (Preedy, 1983). There would seem to be two main reasons for this: (a) that adopting a traditional FE structure could be seen as indicating a 'take over' by the pre-existing technical college, with ex-schools staff disadvantaged, rather than the 'fresh start' for both groups of staff provided by a matrix structure; (b) as discussed in Section 2.4 above, there was during the 1980s a developing interest in matrix structures generally among FE colleges.

Thus, for example, Ballard (1980) describes the matrix structure used in his own college. This separates the functions of curriculum planning, student enrolment and pastoral care from the teaching and resourcing functions. The two arms of the matrix are formed by student divisions and teaching teams. The core of the matrix system is the idea that each member of staff has two roles: as a member of a subject-based teaching team, and as a

tutor or member of a curriculum co-ordinating group responsible to the student division head. Division heads are appointed on a higher grade than teaching team leaders, reflecting the 'student centred' philosophy of the college. There are four student divisions, with the director responsible for overall student progress. Ballard acknowledges that this structure, where most staff have a tutorial and a teaching responsibility, raises the potential of role conflict for staff. Staff have a line responsibility for all aspects of their work to their respective teaching team leaders. The link between student division heads and tutors is described in more ambiguous terms – *'tutors ... have no line responsibility to the [student division] director, but ... must be led and developed into a front-line caring and monitoring team'* (p. 46). The author suggests that horizontal communications in this structure are good, but vertical communication patterns may be less effective.

Ballard (1980) argues that a matrix form of organization enables a degree of mixing between students on different course programmes, and avoids the barriers - sometimes found in colleges with more traditional organization structures - between students in different subunits. The comprehensive nature of the college's student body means that young people with very different course routes and career plans can meet each other. Ballard suggests that while *'claims for complete social integration would be exaggerated, a high degree of social tolerance is evident'* (p. 41).

The benefits of matrix systems are also recognized by Terry (1987). He argues that their main value is in removing staff vested interests in recruiting students to their own departments. At the time when he wrote, student hours were computed for each department separately and the salary of the department head and the numbers of staff at senior grades were determined by the numbers of student hours and level of work. Terry claims that semi-autonomous departments, as traditional in FE, operate against the college functioning as a co-ordinated whole, providing cross-disciplinary courses and offering disinterested advice to students. However, he argues that a drawback of matrix

systems is that they separate subject teams and pastoral care, and they are also complex to operate. He therefore suggests a modification of the departmental system to avoid some of its major problems. This would entail: removing the direct connection between student hours and grades of departments; giving each department head cross-college responsibilities; centralizing student admissions; and a cross-college timetable. In this modified departmental system, the head of department's power over curriculum planning would be moved either downwards to heads of subject teams or upwards to a member of the senior management team.

Also of relevance to the study reported here was material on staff attitudes towards the colleges and the issues involved in helping them adapt and develop commitment to the new organizational framework. This material casts light on the problems of building a shared culture, discussed earlier in relation to the general literature on organizations. Baker (1988) in a paper on the issues involved in establishing tertiary colleges, emphasizes the challenges confronting teaching staff whose institutions are merged to form tertiary colleges, and the need for managers to be sensitive to staff apprehensions and concerns, often based on prejudices and fears about the values and approaches of the other sector forming the new institution. Most of the early colleges were based on existing FE colleges, and an amalgamation took place with the sixth forms of local schools, leaving 11–16 schools. This could give the impression to school staff and parents of an FE takeover. Later, a number of tertiary colleges were established by merging sixth form colleges (often with falling rolls) and FE colleges – giving managers very similar problems in integrating two very disparate groups of staff without appearing to favour either group in the structure and allocation of posts and responsibilities. Baker (1988) argues that the management issues here are complicated by traditional misunderstandings between school and FE sectors - with school staff believing, for example, that pastoral care and guidance and students' affective needs will be neglected in a college setting – as well as more personal concerns about position, role, promotion prospects and status in a new institution.

It is also suggested by Ballard (1980) that tertiary reorganization causes considerable disruption and anxiety for staff, threatening their pre-existing status and that of their subject disciplines. He argues that the principal plays an important part in creating the culture or climate in a tertiary college. In planning organization systems, it is suggested, principals need to take into account staff needs for a structure and climate in which there will be a recognition of their needs and status. Thus principals should focus on developing a shared culture where staff are able to develop a sense of being part of a new tertiary college community.

Also of interest, in relation to staff attitudes towards the colleges and the development of an integrated culture, were two dissertations by tertiary college staff, which explore teacher perspectives on their colleges. Woodward (1975) looked at job satisfaction in a tertiary college. Using a questionnaire survey of staff attitudes, he found that while staff had generally positive attitudes to their work, female respondents indicated lower levels of satisfaction. The author suggests that this may be linked to the fact that much higher proportions of women than men occupied the most junior posts, with very few women at senior lecturer levels. In the college he studied, a matrix system had been adopted. Although he did not investigate this factor in detail, Woodward reports that staff found some difficulty in obtaining decisions, and that there was some inter group tension within and between teaching teams. He suggests that the senior management team should devise strategies for bringing together groups of staff and developing a more satisfied and homogeneous staff.

A dissertation by Grigg (1981) examined staff attitudes using King's (1976) concepts of community and association. As noted in Section 2.4 above, King argues that tertiary colleges are seeking to fuse the traditions and ideologies of school sixth forms (as communities) and further education colleges (as associations) in a single institution. In so doing they bring together staff with fundamentally different perspectives on the best form of provision for 16–19 year olds and the relationship between education as an end

in itself and training as preparation for employment. The place of pastoral care in particular has a different emphasis and orientation. Grigg's (1981) questionnaire survey of staff in the tertiary college where he worked found that they perceived the college more in terms of an association than a community. Significant areas of disagreement were found among staff, linked to their school or FE teaching background. Grigg suggests that, on the basis of findings in one college, the success of tertiary colleges rests on their ability to bring school and FE staff into closer working relationships – an important but difficult task.

Grigg (1981) suggests that the reorganization process, which took place some three years before his study, was difficult and this may have influenced staff perspectives on the college. The tertiary college comprised the amalgamation of a college of technology and two sixth form colleges. Because many staff at the college of technology were engaged in higher level work they obtained the majority of senior posts in the new college. According to Grigg, a number of senior staff from the pre-existing technology college could not be accommodated in the new management structure and hence additional administrative posts were created to absorb them – these posts 'were of somewhat limited value to the college' (p. 84). Some ex-sixth form college staff were disappointed by their new positions, for example staff who had been heads of department appointed at lecturer II level in the new college. Staff from the sixth form colleges experienced considerable changes in moving to a new site, to FE regulations and in many cases alterations in the nature of their teaching, while ex-technology college staff remained in the same buildings, and in many cases their teaching work remained very similar. Thus, Grigg suggests, sixth form college staff may have felt disadvantaged relative to technology college staff.

The dissertation also presents interesting findings on staff attitudes to organization structures. Staff groups tended to perceive the college's matrix structure in different ways. Ex-FE staff were strongly against the matrix structure, despite its claimed

benefits. They favoured a return to a more traditional departmental structure. Staff with school experience tended to favour the matrix system. This may have been because it had elements in common with typical school forms of organization, i.e. in separating academic and pastoral responsibilities. Grigg suggests that another factor which may account for FE teachers' more negative views on the matrix may be that they perceived the new system as diluting the responsibility, status and relative autonomy, together with the promotion opportunities of being able to develop more advanced level work, which they had experienced in the former technology college's departmental system.

Literature focused on the tertiary colleges also highlights the issue of pastoral provision. This was an important concern for the colleges. As noted in Chapter 1, protagonists of all-through 11–18 schools made much of the benefits of continuity for students in the sixth form, where they are known by staff and receive high quality pastoral care and guidance, based on close relationships between students and staff. Colleges run within FE regulations, it was argued, were large and impersonal; with most students only there for one or two years it would be difficult for staff to get to know students; the colleges were based on instrumental rather than expressive concerns and hence pastoral provision would be neglected. The tertiary colleges therefore gave particular emphasis to this area of their work, setting up pastoral systems centred around personal tutors for all full time students.

Terry (1987) argues that the pastoral arrangements of the tertiary colleges, far from being pale copies of those in school sixth forms, were probably *more* effective. Reasons he gives for this assertion are: that economies of scale enable a more generous allocation of staff time to tutoring; the claimed benefits to students of continuity are unjustified since students entering the sixth form will have new tutors and much of the sixth form staff knowledge about students is based on rumour and hearsay, rather than written evidence such as is transferred when students move institutions; finally, that a degree of complacency and taken-for-grantedness is likely to adversely affect pastoral

arrangements in old-established school sixth forms. Terry argues that pastoral care in colleges should provide a synthesis of the best of school and FE practices, based round a tutorial system, either course-based or bringing together students from a variety of courses. This latter approach has the advantage of encouraging social mixing among students from disparate groups across the college, but there are considerable logistical and timetabling problems. A more limited option is mixing non-vocational tutor groups, with correspondingly more limited benefits in terms of student integration. Terry argues that both these alternatives should be rejected in favour of homogeneous tutor groups based round courses. Although this does not encourage student mixing, it is argued that students in heterogeneous course groups drawn from across the college would have little in common, and understanding between students in a group and between students and tutor is likely to be better if based on similar courses and hence similar interests. As Davies (1985) argues, tutors in tertiary colleges have to tread a fine line between care and control functions, and between establishing clear expectations about student work, use of non-contact time and general discipline on the one hand, and on the other, treating students as adults and developing their own sense of responsibility and self discipline.

These studies address, from the perspectives of the colleges themselves, a number of points discussed earlier, in the context of the general literature on organizations. They suggest various issues that were of concern to the colleges: the need to establish a distinctive new tertiary identity, based on comprehensive principles; the question of an appropriate form of organization structure to achieve the goals of the colleges; and, in recognition that pastoral care was seen as a potential weakness, the need to give careful attention to this area of provision. Some of the studies discussed above also note the disruption experienced by staff during the reorganization process, and the two staff surveys by Woodward (1975) and Grigg (1981) indicate that staff attitudes towards their colleges were not always positive. These points would tend to suggest that the development of an integrationist tertiary culture and ethos may be problematic.

2.7 Studies of student perspectives

A final area of literature relevant to the tertiary college study is material on student attitudes towards, and expectations of, various forms of post-16 education. The main claims in favour of the tertiary colleges put forward by their protagonists and by the colleges themselves (Janes and Miles, 1978), as discussed in Chapter 1.2, were concerned with the educational and social benefits for students. It was claimed that tertiary colleges could meet the needs of 16-19 students more appropriately than other types of provision serving this age group. It was therefore important for the study to explore how far this claim had been met from the perspectives of student themselves. How far did students feel that their individual academic and social needs were being catered for by their own college, and how satisfied were they with its provision in general? In exploring these issues it was helpful to refer to studies of student attitudes towards various forms of provision, which cast light on what students want and expect from educational organizations.

A Schools Council sixth form survey (Morton Williams *et al.*, 1970) found that students expressed generally positive views about most aspects of their life in the sixth form, and about their schools' academic functions in particular. Students, in particular girls, expressed a strong wish for better information and more guidance on possible future careers. Although they indicated high levels of satisfaction with the A level courses they were taking, almost three quarters noted that there were other subjects that they would like to take but for various reasons were unable to do so. One of the most frequently reported ways in which the sixth form was seen as different from the rest of the school was the improved and closer relationships between students and staff: *'It was said that sixth formers were treated in a more individual and adult fashion by staff, the atmosphere in the sixth form was less formal, it was easier for pupils to discuss matters with teachers, and staff consulted sixth formers more about school affairs'* (p. 75). At the time of the survey, there was an increasing trend for post-16 students to opt for further

education colleges rather than sixth forms (see Chapter 1.1) because, it was often claimed, students wished to be treated more as adults. However, the results above seem to indicate that sixth form students on the whole felt that their schools offered an acceptable level of adult treatment. Nonetheless, when asked about areas where they would like to see greater differences between the sixth form and the rest of the school, the most frequently mentioned area was the status of sixth formers. A fifth of respondents argued that they should have more freedom to behave as they wished, less discipline, fewer restrictions and more special privileges.

In an analysis of post-compulsory education in five Western European countries, King *et al.* (1974) included a survey on English students' views on their education. In reporting results, King *et al.* do not distinguish between the different types of institution from which their sample was drawn (schools, FE and sixth form colleges), being more concerned with cross-national similarities and differences than inter-institutional ones. The survey is thus of limited value this study, and one might also question how far student views were shaped by the institutional context in which they were based – students, of course, have no basis for comparative judgements about various forms of post-16 provision as their experience in the vast majority of cases is limited to one form of institution – school sixth form, sixth form college, FE college, etc. However, the King *et al* (1974) survey raises some issues of interest here. Compared to students in the other countries surveyed (France, Italy, Germany, Sweden), English students were more favourably disposed towards the institution in which they were being educated. The most frequently identified reason for staying on in full time education was the wish for qualifications which would be of use in a job, mentioned by nearly 90% of students. The next most frequently noted factor was the wish to proceed to higher education (mentioned by 62%). The most important advantage of the students' own school/college was seen as the standard of teaching. As in other surveys, students showed a concern to be treated as adults and were critical of what they saw as petty rules and regulations.

Students expressed a desire to have more autonomy, to be consulted more, and for more informal staff-student relations.

A large-scale NFER study (Dean *et al.*, 1979) examined full time students' educational experiences in various forms of 16–19 institution, including sixth forms, sixth form colleges, FE and tertiary colleges. The sample included 45 institutions, of which three were tertiary colleges. The study found that when students started their post-16 courses, in whatever type of institution and in spite of differences in the degree of choice they had exercised, a wish to improve their career prospects was a major reason for staying on in education. There were, however, significant differences in students' views of 16+ education. The attitudes of college students (including tertiary colleges) were more positive than those of sixth formers on many issues. Sixth formers were not greatly dissatisfied, though some grammar school sixth formers were critical of the traditions and rituals of their schools, while students in comprehensive schools expressed more positive views.

The study also collected heads' and principals' views on the aims of 16–19 education. They showed broad agreement about aims, but differed in the means they saw for achieving these aims. While colleges stressed the importance of *'the provision of an adult or near-adult atmosphere'*, the school heads, in contrast, emphasized *'the benefits of contact with younger pupils and leadership opportunities'* (p. 35). Dean *et al.* (1979) suggest that this difference in emphasis may account for the differences in student perspectives. At the beginning of their courses, a high proportion of students chose 'adult atmosphere' as the most important expected difference between life in the fifth form (year 11) and post-16 education. Two years later, questioned towards the end of their courses, the college's adult atmosphere was also the most important reason students gave for preferring a college, but the benefits of responsibility for younger pupils was not seen as the most important characteristic by the minority who stated a preference for the school sixth form. Overall, two thirds of students felt it was better to be educated in

colleges, 21 per cent opted for schools and 13 per cent were undecided. In sixth form or tertiary colleges and colleges of FE, over 80 per cent felt that colleges were preferable. Of the students in comprehensive schools, 45 per cent felt schools were preferable, 34 per cent opted for colleges, with 21 per cent undecided. (Students were asked only whether they would prefer 'college' in general, and not asked to distinguish between sixth form, FE and tertiary colleges, since it was felt that students were not clear about the nature of particular types of college.)

While schools and colleges may see themselves as performing similar functions, the *ways in which they perform these functions can have far-reaching effects on their* students. Having explored student perspectives on the pros and cons of various forms of 16–19 provision, Dean *et al.* (1979) conclude that 'a break at 16' has much to recommend it, and that many of the doubts and reservations about the effects of a transfer to a new institution at 16+, have no foundation, at least in the eyes of students. The authors suggest that the tertiary college 'points the way to the future', incorporating the best aspects of both school and FE sectors.

King's (1976) study of various forms of post-16 provision, referred to in Section 2.4 above, also included a survey of student views of their schools and colleges. In the recently established tertiary college that he studied, students expressed generally positive views about most aspects of their life and work. King suggests that the experience of tertiary college reported by students was rather 'school-like' in terms of its importance for students' social life, and their relatively favourable attitudes towards non-examined aspects of the curriculum. It was 'college-like' in that students felt they were treated as adults, and did not suffer from unnecessary restrictions and regulations. It also resembled other types of college in that students reported rather lower levels of a 'sense of belonging', and 'knowing some staff well' than those in schools. There was also a high degree of satisfaction with the amount of individual help and guidance received. In general, King argues, the tertiary college represented 'something of a social hybrid' (p.

187). In terms of student perspectives, the college seemed to provide both supportive relationships, and relevance and purposefulness in learning, reflecting, King suggests, elements of both school and FE approaches.

These studies suggest that it is important for institutions serving the 16-19 age group to achieve the delicate balance between treating students as adults, and maintaining a close overview of their work and social development. The Dean *et al.* (1979) and King (1976) studies, though based on a rather small sample of tertiary colleges (in the case of King's study just one recently-established college), suggest that they may have managed to achieve this balance, at least with full time students - neither study included part time students. Both studies provided useful data on student attitudes in a variety of post-16 organizations for comparison with the findings of the tertiary colleges study (see Chapter 6).

2.8 Key themes for the study

The literature review raised a number of major themes and issues which helped to shape the design of the research study and the analysis of the findings. Six main themes informing the study can be identified.

Organizational perspectives

First, the literature on organizations suggests that it may be necessary to draw on a range of perspectives to understand how organizations function, and the views of those who work within them. Formal and rational system approaches remain dominant; they may be particularly useful for examining the official and structural aspects of organizations, and the perspectives of organizational leaders. They may be less appropriate than subjective, ambiguity and political models for understanding the viewpoints and attitudes of organizational members - staff and students (Theodossin, 1983, 1984). Thus it was

useful to draw on formal and rational system models in exploring the official purposes of the tertiary colleges, and senior staffs' perspectives on structural and cultural factors in developing a new type of organization. It was also important to test formal approaches to organizations in the light of the meanings and interpretations of organizational members - staff and students - which might be different from the official version.

Goals

The second important theme was that of organizational goals, and how far these are realised in practice. The tertiary colleges, like all organizations, were established to achieve particular purposes or goals, as outlined in the Tertiary Colleges Panel publication (Janes and Miles, 1978) discussed in Chapter 1.2. The study therefore sought to analyse the goals of the colleges as set out by Janes and Miles (1978), discussed in individual college documents, and expressed by principals and senior staff in interview. Notwithstanding the criticisms of the notion of organizational goals discussed earlier in this chapter, the concept forms a useful basis for interpreting organizational leaders' expressed intentions and purposes, and assessing how far these fit in with perceived practice. However, it would seem to be important to avoid the assumptions of formal and rational system models about the consensual nature of goals. There was therefore a need to explore staff and student views of organizational goals, to examine the possibility that in relatively large and complex organizations, members might not share the official goals put forward by organizational leaders.

Mission

A third and related theme is the concept of mission. As Selznick (1957) points out, organizational leaders need to set out a mission which describes the nature, purpose and values of the organization and its future direction, and to develop a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the mission, both internally among staff and students, and

externally among a range of stakeholders. The establishment of a clear mission is likely to be particularly important in new organizations, as Schein's (1985) analysis of the role of 'founder - leaders' indicates. Thus declarations of intent or mission were made by comprehensive school heads and other protagonists of comprehensivization at the time when the early comprehensive schools were being established (see Daunt, 1975). New types of organization need to set out a rationale and justification for their existence, especially when, as in the case of tertiary colleges, they are developed incrementally with no powerful sponsor to explain their mission. The tertiary colleges study was concerned to assess how far the principals of the early tertiary colleges saw themselves as having established a mission. However, as with goals, it was also necessary to explore to what extent the mission was understood and shared by students and staff, and expressed in practice. If it was shared and actively pursued within the colleges, then staff and student perspectives on the objectives and values of their colleges would broadly mirror those of the principals.

Structure and culture

A fourth theme was the respective roles of structure and culture in shaping new organizations. How far did organizational restructuring to create the tertiary colleges lead to changes in values and attitudes? Were new organizations which brought together staff from differing traditions and cultures able to build a new integrationist culture that was shared by organizational leaders and members? Related issues here were how far different types of organization structure are appropriate for particular purposes and whether departmental or matrix systems were seen to better serve the goals of the tertiary colleges. The study sought to assess how far Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 1 and paradigm 2 perspectives were evident in members' attitudes towards the tertiary colleges. On the one hand, it would seem important, if the integrationist goals claimed by tertiary college protagonists and Janes and Miles (1978) (see Chapter 1.2) were to be realised, that a paradigm 1 approach prevailed. On the other hand, much of the literature

suggests the depth and persistence of organizational subcultures, and the scope for 'balkanised' (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992) subgroups in complex organizations, which may militate against the development of a shared 'tertiary' culture and ethos.

Student perspectives

Another important area of concern for the study was the needs and expectations of young people themselves, and how far the tertiary colleges fulfilled their perceived needs. As discussed in Chapter 1, competing claims were put forward about the educational needs of the 16-19 age group, reflecting the somewhat ambivalent attitudes in society at large about whether this group should be regarded as children or as young adults. As Macfarlane (1993) points out:

> *'As a nation we are undecided over whether those aged 16-19 are pupils who require the security of a school community, or students who thrive in a fully adult college environment, or, indeed, whether they are best catered for in an institution designed specifically for their transitional stage of development'* (p. xii).

Thus it was argued that 16-19s benefit from the security and expressive values of a sixth form environment, where they are closely supervised and taught by staff who know them well; that they are likely to be deterred from staying on in full time education if they are required to transfer to a new institution at 16+; that settling into a new college is difficult for this age group, and that pastoral care and guidance are likely to be inadequate in a large institution where students spend only one or two years. On the other hand, it was claimed that young people resent the restrictions of the sixth form and prefer the more adult atmosphere of college life; that tertiary colleges could offer a much wider course choice, where students could select an individual programme of studies, including a mix of academic and vocational elements; and that including all 16-19s under one roof enables social mixing and some degree of integration among all students in this age

group. Appropriate pastoral guidance was an important question, given the concerns about this area of provision in a college context, discussed earlier.

The benefits and drawbacks of various forms of 16-19 provision noted above relate largely to the supposed, rather than expressed, needs and preferences of young people, (though the student attitude studies discussed in Section 2.7 above provided support for a college, rather than school, environment). The tertiary colleges were set up primarily to provide a particular kind of educational and social experience for young people, based on their supposed needs. Bradshaw's (1972) distinction between types of need is relevant here. He argues that it is important to distinguish between 'normative needs' (i.e. needs defined by experts on the basis of their specialist knowledge, for example teachers' professional assessments of students' needs), and 'felt needs' (i.e. those defined by clients on the basis of what they believe they require, for example students' or employers' definitions of their perceived needs). It was therefore important to assess the degree of match between normative needs and felt needs within the tertiary colleges, and to explore how far the students themselves perceived the colleges to be meeting their felt needs, and providing an appropriate educational and social environment. If the colleges were successful in both identifying and providing for students' felt needs, one would expect students to express generally positive attitudes towards the provision and ethos of their colleges.

Organizational change

The final theme was concerned with organizational change. The study sought to assess how far the large-scale restructuring involved in establishing the colleges had become institutionalized and embedded by the time of the survey, and whether there were particular factors in individual colleges that seemed to be associated with the successful implementation of the change to tertiary status. All the surveyed colleges had been operating for at least five years at the time of the survey, so it was expected that the

changes had become established as part of the colleges' normal routine. However, as much of the literature indicates, large-scale change is a complex and long-term process, and it may take many years for alterations in attitudes and cultures to take place (see Section 2.5 above). It was important to investigate the extent to which staff and students perceived their colleges as having developed a shared integrationist culture. If the colleges had succeeded in developing a new tertiary culture, one would expect staff and students to express generally positive views about their life and work in college and its general atmosphere and ethos.

Also of relevance here is the notion of an 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between policy intentions and outcomes in practice. Thus while policy-makers, in this case college principals and senior managers, may set out plans designed to integrate academic and vocational areas of work and establish structures for achieving these plans, the outcomes in individual colleges, and at subunit level within colleges, may be very different. A related issue concerned the contextual factors influencing the development of each of the surveyed colleges. Although the circumstances of reorganization in the areas involved, and the historical development of the colleges were beyond the scope of the study, the 'organizational saga' (Clark, 1983), specific to each college, could be expected to have had an important influence on the extent to which a tertiary culture and ethos had been developed. The success of change is highly dependent on contextual factors (Fullan, 1991; Huberman and Miles, 1984).

It was therefore important to explore how far the tertiary innovation had become established within colleges and subunits. Were there variations in staff and student attitudes between colleges, and between subgroups, and were there factors relating to particular colleges - for example, size or organizational structure - that would seem to be associated with differences in levels of staff and student satisfaction? Since participation in decision making seems to be associated with staff commitment to change, the study sought to examine how far staff saw their colleges as having developed participatory

ways of working and cross college collaboration, and whether such factors seemed to be linked to more positive staff attitudes. It was also important to assess how far the change to tertiary status had resulted in the responsiveness to student needs that was claimed for the colleges (see Chapter 1.2); i.e. how far did students perceive the colleges as providing: an individual programme of studies to meet their own requirements, appropriate pastoral provision, and an ethos which achieved an appropriate balance between treating students as adults and maintaining an oversight of their work and progress (Macfarlane, 1993).

By exploring these six themes, the study sought to cast light on the factors which may be associated with the successful development of new types of organization. The research questions derived from these themes are explained in Chapter 3, together with the research methods used for the study.

Chapter 3 Research design and methodology

The purpose of the research study was to examine the objectives of a new form of organization – the tertiary college – and to assess how far these intentions were realised in practice. At the time of the study there were 18 tertiary colleges, many of which had been operating for some time – the first tertiary college was established in 1970. However, there had been no in-depth research study of this new type of institution, exploring such issues as: what were the goals of the tertiary colleges, what range of provision did they offer, how were the colleges perceived by students and staff? It was therefore felt appropriate to undertake a relatively large-scale survey of the colleges, to attempt to provide an overall picture of their work and to make some assessment of how far they were achieving their objectives.

3.1 Research aims and questions

Drawing on the ideas discussed in the literature review, the following broad aims were established for the research.

To examine organizational innovation in education with reference to the tertiary colleges, exploring the following issues:

(1) To what extent are the goals set out by institutional leaders shared by other members of the organization?

(2) How far do new structures influence perspectives and attitudes?

(3) To what extent are new types of organization able to develop a distinctive culture and ethos?

(4) Are there major differences between individual organizations of the same type?

The following research questions were derived from these broad aims.

(a) What were the 'official' goals of the colleges, as expressed by principals, vice-principals and aims and organization documents?

(b) What forms of organization structure had been adopted to pursue these goals?

(c) Did principals claim that the colleges had a distinctive 'tertiary' ethos?

(d) How far did staff and students share the official view of the goals, organization and distinctive approach of the colleges.

(e) What degree of integration and shared perspective did staff and students perceive between academic and vocational, full and part time areas of work, staff and students?

(f) How far were student pastoral care arrangements, in terms of academic, personal and careers guidance, perceived as effective by staff and students?

(g) How far were particular forms of organization structure and college size linked with differences in (d) to (f) above?

Evidence for questions (a) to (c) was gathered by means of interviews with college principals and vice principals, and analysis of college documents. Questions (d) to (g) were explored by means of questionnaire surveys of staff and full and part time students. Details of the research design and methods used are discussed below.

3.2 Research design

The sample of colleges

One way of approaching the research would have been to undertake a comparative study, examining tertiary colleges alongside the other main forms of institutional provision for the 16-19 age group: sixth form colleges, FE colleges and school sixth forms. This would have had the advantage of enabling comparison between different types of institution and some assessment of the claims made for and against tertiary colleges *vis-à-vis* other forms of provision, discussed in Chapter 1.2 above. However, given the limited time and resources of one researcher, it was not feasible to cover more than 10-12 institutions in the study. This would have entailed very small groups of each type of institution, including probably only three tertiary colleges. Such a small sample could not claim to be representative of the tertiary colleges as a group. It was therefore seen as preferable to focus on the tertiary colleges alone, to enable a more in-depth analysis.

In order to address the research questions above, it was felt important to look at a relatively large sample of colleges, in order to represent the range of approaches and organization structures adopted by the colleges, as well as geographical location. It was also felt important that the colleges selected for study should have been in operation for at least five years and not still in the throes of reorganization. Any new organization, especially one involving a merger between different sectors (in this case, school and FE), takes a number of years to become established and to institutionalize its structures and processes. Staff views in a recently reorganized school or college are likely to be coloured by the change process, and hence may be less favourable than at a time of more stability (see Theodossin, 1984).

Twelve of the oldest established tertiary colleges were therefore invited to take part in the research. Eleven agreed, with the twelfth providing an interview and documentary material. All of the eleven colleges had been in operation for five years or more. The

colleges that agreed to take part were spread geographically, providing a reasonable representation of the overall distribution of the colleges, many of which were clustered in the NW or SW of England. Four of the sample colleges were located in the SW of England, three in the NW, three in the Midlands/SE, and one in Wales.

College	FE group size	Student numbers	Organization structure	Location	No. of years as tertiary college
1	5	1000 ft 5500 pt	matrix	SW	8
2	5	1050 ft 3400 pt	matrix	Midlands	8
3	3	420 ft 1500 pt	matrix	SW	9
4	7	1900 ft 1300 pt	matrix	SE	5
5	6	1600 ft 2000 pt	dept	NW	7
6	7	1800 ft 4000 pt	dept	SW	12
7	5	1300 ft 1000 pt	dept	Wales	7
8	5	1150 ft 2000 pt	dept	NW	6
9	5	900 ft 2000 pt	dept	SE	8
10	5	1000 ft 10000 pt	dept	NW	10
11	5	1000 ft 2500 pt	dept	SW	9

Table 3.1: General characteristics of the college sample

The surveyed colleges also varied in terms of size and organization structure, which enabled exploration of a range of issues raised in the literature. Three of the colleges were large, i.e. FE group 6 and above, the rest group 5 and below; four had matrix structures, while the others operated departmental systems with various degrees of modification. Table 3.1 shows a number of general characteristics of the 11 colleges.

Methodology

As noted in Chapter 1.2, the study focused on provision for full and part time 16–19 year olds, the main area of the colleges' work in terms of full time student numbers. To address the research questions listed above, it was necessary to examine perspectives at three different levels within the colleges: (a) principals and senior staff; (b) teaching staff; and (c) full and part time students, and to compare (a), (b) and (c) for similarities and differences. It was judged most appropriate to use semi-structured interviews to explore the views of principals and senior staff. This enabled coverage of relevant issues in some depth and the inclusion of particular points seen as important by individual respondents which were not always itemized on the interview schedule – points which would probably be neglected in a structured interview and almost certainly in a questionnaire study (see Cohen and Manion, 1989). In eliciting staff and student perspectives, a questionnaire survey was more appropriate, enabling the study to assess the range of staff and student views across the colleges from a large number of departments and subunits relatively quickly and easily, in a way that would have not been possible using interviews.

The study thus combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Evidence from interviews with senior staff complemented the questionnaire data gathered from staff and students. Traditionally, texts on research in the social sciences have portrayed quantitative and qualitative approaches as quite separate and based on very different paradigms and logics of enquiry (Bryman, 1992). Quantitative approaches, as used in

social surveys and experimental investigations, are based on assumptions, methods and procedures drawn from the natural sciences. The research process is seen as a logical and ordered one, in which hypotheses are derived from general theories, these hypotheses usually stating likely causal connection between variables. Data are then collected and analysed and the causal connection specified by the hypothesis is verified or rejected. Quantitative approaches are often based on statistical analysis of a carefully selected sample of cases, so that generalizations can be made about the population as a whole.

Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, as exemplified in ethnographic studies, are based on a phenomenological perspective, which rejects the appropriateness of the natural science model for studying human groups and organizations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989). Qualitative approaches therefore typically use methods such as participant observation or unstructured interviewing which, it is argued, give a more realistic and rounded view of the subjects investigated, making it less likely that inappropriate conceptual frameworks and prior assumptions will be imposed on the study by the researcher. Rather than using predefined categories, frameworks and hypotheses, the qualitative researcher *'looks through a wide lens, searching for patterns and inter-relationships between a previously unspecified set of concepts*' (Brannen, 1992, p. 4). Theory in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) terms is grounded in the data, i.e. it arises from detailed consideration of the findings, and deriving patterns and frameworks from them.

More recently, however, researchers in the social sciences have come to question a rigid dichotomy between the two approaches and to suggest that methods drawn from both traditions may be used to complement each other. Hammersley (1992) argues that the conventional dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative approaches is over-simplistic, inaccurate and unhelpful to researchers. Thus, for example, he points out that many natural science researchers do not adhere to the tenets of logical positivism that are ascribed to them. Similarly, ethnographers sometimes use hypothesis-testing, and very frequently make quantitative claims in verbal form, e.g. 'sometimes', 'regularly',

'frequently'. Thus there is no clear cut dichotomy between the two approaches; '*what is involved is not a simple contrast between two opposed standpoints, but a range of positions and decisions*' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 51). A selection of approach regarding methods and data collection instruments, Hammersley argues, ought to depend on the purposes and circumstances of the particular research, rather than philosophical commitments and blind adherence to (often misunderstood) logics of enquiry.

Brannen (1992) takes a similarly eclectic view in suggesting areas in which quantitative and qualitative paradigms overlap and have common features, and the benefits of a combined approach. Bryman (1988, 1992) explores these advantages further. He suggests a number of ways in which quantitative and qualitative approaches can be combined to enhance the quality of research work. Two of his points are particularly relevant to the tertiary colleges study. First, the use of two different methods can be useful for purposes of triangulation, i.e. the validity of findings, and one's confidence in them is enhanced if they are established on the basis of more than one method. The issue of validity is discussed further below. Another benefit of combining methods is that the research can thereby build up an overview and general picture of a relatively complex research domain such as an organization, where some aspects and issues are more amenable to quantitative methods and others to a qualitative approach. In this context, the dovetailing of the two types of research is desirable '*because they are addressing different but complementary aspects of organizations*' (Bryman, 1988, p. 158). In the case of this study, it was felt to be important to gain a view of the college from various different levels within the organization, given the issues raised in the literature about the differing 'meanings' of organizational members (see Chapter 2.5).

Bryman (1992) makes a further distinction between quantitative and qualitative *methods* and *types of data*. As he points out, a quantitative approach, for example a survey, obviously provides quantitative data, but may also be used to collect some qualitative

evidence by means of open ended questions. Similarly, qualitative data may be quantified by researchers, especially when data are being analysed by computer.

Drawing on these ideas, the tertiary colleges study employed a broadly quantitative approach in surveying staff and student perspectives on their colleges, the major focus of the research. This approach was complemented and reinforced by use of qualitative methods in semi-structured interviews with principals and vice-principals, and documentary analysis, providing a basis for comparing staff and student views on the colleges with the perspectives of senior management. Additional qualitative data were collected from both staff and students by means of open ended items on the questionnaires. The open ended questions served two purposes: verifying and supporting the data contained in the main body of the questionnaire and ensuring that no important issues and concerns had been omitted; and providing a more detailed and rounded picture of attitudes and opinions expressed, amplifying and illustrating the quantitative evidence.

Exploratory stage

The main phase of the research was preceded by an exploratory stage, during which the researcher visited all the survey colleges and three other tertiary colleges, as well as officers from the LEAs involved. Loosely structured discussions were held with the principals and LEA staff to gain a broad picture of their perspectives on the development of the colleges. Arrangements were also made for access to the survey colleges for the fieldwork stage of the research.

One of the three non-surveyed colleges was asked to help in developing and piloting the research instruments. With the agreement of the principal, the researcher held discussions with volunteer focus groups of staff and 16-19 students: 6 staff, 5 full time students and 5 part time students. These discussions explored the factors which staff and students saw as important aspects of their life and work at college, influencing their

views on its provision. This process aided the design of the questionnaires, helping the researcher to ensure that both content and language were relevant and meaningful to respondents (Cohen and Manion, 1989).

At a later date, the researcher returned to the same college to pilot the questionnaires with volunteer groups of staff and students: 8 staff, 10 full time and 10 part time students. Although, as requested, the pilot respondents were drawn from a range of departments, as they were relatively small sample groups of volunteers, their views may not have been representative of those of staff and students overall (see Wragg's (1994) discussion of the limitations of opportunity samples). However, since the researcher was dependent on the goodwill of the college concerned, to organize the pilot groups, this problem was difficult to avoid.

Student questionnaires

The full and part time student questionnaires were designed with reference to issues raised by the student focus groups and in the literature, particularly the student surveys conducted by King (1976) and Dean *et al.* (1979) discussed in Chapter 2.7. The questionnaire sought to address student views on research questions (d) - (f). Research question (g) was explored by comparing the perspectives of various student subgroups, and student views in larger and smaller colleges, and those with matrix and departmental organization structures. As mentioned above, the draft full time and part time questionnaires were piloted with students in a non-surveyed tertiary college, and some minor modifications were made. In particular, items were added on the accommodation and facilities of the college, as this was an area about which students in the pilot study held strong views. The pilot stage also enabled refinement of the coding on the questionnaire, drawing on the range of answers put forward during the pilot. Thus for example on the full time questionnaire, it was decided to increase the range of possible answers listed for questions 8 and 9 on reasons for coming to college and course choice.

This enabled most items to be pre-coded for ease of analysis. The final versions of the two student questionnaires are included in Appendix 1.

In addition to factual data on courses studied, the full time student questionnaires were designed to explore student attitudes towards their life and work in general at college, focusing in particular on the claims made about the colleges in the Tertiary College Panel document (Janes and Miles, 1978, see Chapter 1.2) and the issues raised in the literature on student perspectives discussed in Chapter 2.7. The questionnaires therefore included items on the general atmosphere and ethos of the college; the extent to which students felt they were treated as adults; social relationships with students, including those on other courses, and relationships with staff.

Students were also asked about their reasons for coming to college and for course choice. Other important areas which the questionnaires sought to explore were: the extent to which students felt their course was appropriate to their own individual needs, the extent of 'mixed economy' courses covering academic and vocational elements; whether students had encountered difficulties in transferring to a new institution at 16+; and the extent and adequacy of pastoral care arrangements.

The questionnaire for part time students was modified to include less detail on respondents' course programmes, since many were following a prescribed programme of study as part of a day-release or other employment-related course. Items on the social aspects of college life, pastoral provision and the general ethos and atmosphere of the college were the same as those on the full time student questionnaire, as a means for assessing how far part time students, as compared to the full time group, felt themselves to be part of the college community.

Staff questionnaire

The staff questionnaire was designed and piloted in a similar way, drawing on issues raised in the literature and by the focus group of staff during the exploratory stage. The questionnaire was designed to explore staff perspectives on the objectives and organization structures of their colleges and the extent to which staff saw their colleges as pursuing the distinctive tertiary college goals outlined in Janes and Miles (1978) (research question (d)).

Data from the questionnaire also provided a basis for comparing staff views on college objectives with those of the principal and other senior staff in each college. The questionnaire also sought to examine whether there was any mismatch between the objectives staff saw their college as *actually* pursuing and those objectives they felt *ought* to be followed. The instrument also included items on the supposed benefits and drawbacks of matrix and departmental systems of organization, to test whether the claims made for matrix structures in the literature (see Chapter 2.4) were borne out in practice. As noted earlier, matrix forms of organization are argued to enable a greater extent of staff participation in decision making, and hence greater 'ownership' of decisions. Involvement in decision making tends to be linked to higher levels of staff satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (see Mortimore *et al.*, 1988). Items were therefore included on actual and desired levels of participation in decision making.

Staff were also asked about the college's programme of studies and pastoral provision for students, to assess whether staff perspectives on these issues matched those of students (research question (f)). Another area of attention in the questionnaire was the extent of interaction between staff from academic and vocational areas of work, and ex-school and ex-FE staff (research question (e)). This issue was examined to assess how far the colleges had succeeded in building an 'integrationist' culture (Meyerson and Martin, 1987), and whether staff perceived there to be continuing divisions between previously

separate subgroups of teachers (see Chapter 2.4). Research question (g) was explored by comparing staff views in: individual colleges, larger and smaller colleges, and those with matrix and departmental structures.

The questionnaire concluded with a section asking respondents what they saw as the main benefits and drawbacks of tertiary colleges for both students and teaching staff. Unlike students, who have no direct basis of experience for assessing the relative merits of various forms of institutional provision for 16–19s, many staff surveyed had taught in the pre-existing schools or FE college which had been brought together to form the tertiary college. Many staff had also taught in other schools or colleges as well, and hence were able to compare what the tertiary college offered with provision in other types of 16–19 education. The questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

Interviews and documentary material

Interviews were held with the college principal and at least one vice principal in each college. A semi-structured format was used, in order to provide flexibility for respondents to expand on particular areas of questioning and to raise issues which they felt to be important but were not covered in the interview schedule (Johnson, 1994). The schedule is shown in Appendix 3. It was designed to explore senior staff views on the purposes and organization of the tertiary colleges, and how far they had developed a distinctive ethos and range of student provision. Interviews with principals were tape-recorded, and transcribed with secretarial assistance. Since transcription of recorded interviews is a lengthy task, was felt that no more than the 11 interviews with principals should be taped. Interviews with vice-principals were therefore recorded in note form and written up afterwards. The perspectives of the principals were of primary interest, with the data from vice principals providing a means of corroborating and cross-checking the accounts of their colleges given by the principals (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989).

Documentary material from the colleges amplified the evidence gathered in interviews (Johnson, 1994), and also provided background data on the context and provision of each college. The researcher consulted prospectuses, staff and student handbooks, and 'aims and organization' statements. In a number of cases, principals had written papers on the philosophy and purposes of their colleges, for staff and other interested parties, for example visitors from LEAs which were considering tertiary reorganization. These papers provided a useful expansion of a number of the themes explored in the interviews with senior staff.

Sampling and data collection

It was felt that the sample of 12 (later 11) of the oldest-established colleges would provide a representative picture of the work of the colleges that could at least tentatively be claimed to be generalizable to the population of the tertiary colleges as a group. It was important to look at the overall views of principals staff and students across all the surveyed colleges. However it has to be remembered that perspectives and attitudes do not refer to the colleges as a group but only to the social unit in which they are located (see King's (1976) discussion of the aggregative fallacy). Also in the light of research findings of considerable differences between comprehensive schools (see Richardson, 1975; Kerckhoff *et al.*, 1996, in Chapter 1.2 above), it was expected that there might be disparities between individual colleges. For these reasons it was desirable to select a representative sample of staff and student views *within* each college.

The staff sample in each surveyed college was selected to include 25% of the full time teaching staff. This was judged a sufficient proportion to include the range of staff views (see, e.g. Hoinville *et al.*, 1978). The sample was stratified in order to represent the views of a quarter of the staff in each department or other administrative subunit (e.g. teaching team or division in those colleges having a matrix rather than departmental form of organization), since it was expected that staff in different departments might have

differing views about various aspects of the ethos and organization of the colleges. The sample was therefore selected randomly from the names of full time teaching staff by department or other subunit, including the head of department. Members of staff who had taught at the college for less than a year were excluded from the sample, since it was judged that they might lack detailed understanding of the college and its organization and culture.

However, in the smaller colleges surveyed, a 25% sample of staff would have produced very small numbers, rather too low for statistical analysis - for example, less than 10 in the case of college 3 which had just under 40 full time teaching staff. The sample size in these cases was therefore raised to include at least 30 staff, so that a minimum of 25 completed questionnaires were received from each college (see Table 3.2). This was regarded as the minimum acceptable number for purposes of statistical analysis (see e.g. Weisberg and Bowen, 1977).

The researcher spent 5 days in each college conducting interviews with principals and other members of the senior management team, and administering staff and student questionnaires. Staff questionnaires were issued shortly after the researcher's arrival, with a request that they should be returned before the end of her visit to the college. It was therefore possible in most cases to remind non-respondents in person or via their head of department, and thus to achieve a higher response rate than might have been achieved from a postal questionnaire (see Hoinville *et al.* (1978)). It is important to build in strategies to achieve as high a response as possible, because a low response rate threatens the reliability of a survey, and also its validity, since those who do respond are unlikely to provide an accurate picture of the views of the overall sample. The total sample included 455 staff and the overall response rate was 90% with 411 completed questionnaires returned. Response rates from individual colleges ranged from 64% to 100% with a mean rate of 84%. Numbers and percentages of staff respondents in each college are shown in Table 3.2.

College No.	N =	% of respondents	Response rate by college, %
1	30	7.3	97
2	25	6.1	71
3	28	6.8	80
4	64	15.6	64
5	49	11.9	100
6	50	12.2	79
7	31	7.5	100
8	34	8.3	81
9	30	7.3	81
10	37	9.0	90
11	33	8.0	83
Total	**411**	**100**	**84**

Table 3.2: Staff respondents

Determining sample size is very often a matter of judgement, rather than calculation (Hoinville *et al.*, 1978). In the case of the student survey, it was important that the full and part time student sample groups should be large enough to enable analysis of sub groups (e.g. gender, and type of course studied). It was therefore decided to include 100 full time and 100 part time students from each college in the survey. (100 cases is the minimum recommended number as a basis for assuming a relatively normal distribution – see, for example, Weisberg and Bowen, 1977). A stratified sampling design was used to ensure representation of students following the range of courses offered by the colleges. Prior to the researcher's fieldwork visit, colleges were sent a sampling frame (shown in Appendix 4.1) and asked to select 8 tutor/course groups (assuming approximately 12 students per group), to provide a sample of approximately 100 full time students. The sampling frame included GCE A and O level groups, BEC and TEC groups (now BTEC), and groups representing areas of vocational work in which the particular college specialized, e.g. catering, hairdressing, engineering, motor vehicle

work. A similar procedure was followed in selecting approximately 100 part time students. As the focus of the survey was the 16–19 age group, colleges were asked to exclude leisure and recreational class groups, as these groups could be expected to include a majority of adult students, rather than 16–19 year olds.

Colleges were also asked to arrange for the selected students to complete the questionnaire during the week of the researcher's fieldwork. All the survey colleges were helpful in making these arrangements, so administration of the questionnaires was a relatively straightforward matter. Students completed the questionnaire in their class groups during teaching time (usually tutor periods, PSE or general studies classes), supervised by the researcher, tutors of the selected groups, or other members of staff.

Response rate was an important consideration in deciding to sample *groups* - cluster samples - rather than random sampling of individual students, stratified to represent the various course programmes offered by the colleges. The latter approach might be claimed to give a more representative sample of overall student views, but had the decided disadvantage that it would not be possible to arrange for students to complete the questionnaire during their timetabled sessions in college. They would be responsible individually for completion and return of the questionnaire. This strategy, it was felt, would be likely to result in a low response rate, and also possibly to students colluding in completing the questionnaire. Since all the colleges were prepared to allow students to take part in the research during timetabled classes, this was chosen as the preferred alternative. This resulted in a virtually 100% response rate since all students in the sample groups who were present on the day their group was surveyed were required to complete the questionnaire. Sample groups were defined as comprising all those students present on the day of the survey; no account was taken of absent students, because of the complexities involved in identifying them and making arrangements for the supply and completion of questionnaires.

There were two exceptions to the generally high response rate. One sampled group were permitted to leave early when the heating in an annexe building failed. They were asked to return their questionnaires the following day, but only 5 of the group of 11 did so. In the other case, 4 students who were preparing for a imminent typing exam were given excusal from the survey, though the other 4 members of their class group took part.

	Full Time		**Part Time**	
College No.	**N =**	*%*	**N =**	*%*
1	87	8.3	78	9.0
2	72	6.8	65	7.5
3	100	9.5	17	2.0
4	100	9.5	106	12.3
5	106	10.1	87	10.1
6	87	8.3	98	11.3
7	103	9.8	66	7.6
8	88	8.4	104	12.0
9	105	10.0	100	11.6
10	103	9.8	76	8.8
11	101	9.6	68	7.9
Total	**1052**	**100**	**865**	**100**

Table 3.3: Student respondents by college

Numbers and percentages of student respondents in each college are shown in Table 3.3. As mentioned earlier, the sampling strategy was designed to produce full and part time samples of approximately 100 student responses per college, by taking 8 teaching groups (assuming roughly 12 students per group). This assumption was based on information from the colleges about average teaching group size. As Table 3.3 shows the strategy was more successful in the case of the full time sample than the part time students.

College estimates of group size may have been unduly high, and the researcher failed to allow for student absences. Also, the part time sample provided by college 3 was very low, as most of the college's part time work comprised adult leisure and recreational courses (which were excluded from the survey) rather than vocationally oriented courses for the 16-19 age group. The college is situated in a predominantly rural, agricultural area, with very little industry or commerce, and there was hence little demand for vocational provision. Also at the time of the researcher's visit most of the limited group of vocational 16-19 students were out of college on work placements, so only 17 students were available to take part in the survey. Their responses were included in the overall analysis of student views, but excluded from the examination of inter-college differences as the numbers involved were too small for statistical analysis as a subgroup.

Issues of validity and reliability

Questions of validity and reliability have been mentioned above, in the context of the general methodological approach of the study and the need to ensure high response rates. Since validity and reliability are such important issues for any investigation, it is important to explain briefly how they were addressed in the design and conduct of the research as a whole.

The concepts of validity and reliability were originally developed in the context of quantitative studies in the social sciences (Kirk and Miller, 1986) which sought to use highly controlled and standardized procedures and precise quantification of variables, following the positivist paradigm of the natural and physical sciences (Coolican, 1990). There has therefore been some reluctance to apply these ideas to research which does not fit the exacting requirements of the positivist model. Nonetheless, they provide a useful discipline prompting investigators to ensure that research is designed and undertaken in a systematic and logical way, so that errors and misjudgements are as far as possible avoided or reduced, at all stages of the research. As Yin (1989) points out, research

should be conducted as if '*someone was always looking over your shoulder*', constantly questioning the rationale and procedures of the investigation.

Various strategies were used in the study reported here to try to ensure that it provided a *valid* picture of the topic of enquiry. The exploratory stage was important, involving discussions with principals, staff and students and piloting the research instruments. This enabled the researcher to ensure that the main issues and concerns of importance to the respondents were included in the data collection instruments, thereby, it was hoped, giving an accurate picture of their perspectives on the tertiary colleges, rather than a portrayal imposed by the researcher. Also important in this respect was the inclusion of open comments items in the research instruments, as mentioned earlier.

Other validity concerns were also important in designing the questionnaires and interview schedules. The researcher attempted to assess their *content* validity by asking researchers with experience in the field of enquiry to evaluate them. *Construct* validity is concerned with developing appropriate operational measures of the concepts being studied. This issue was addressed in a number of ways: (1) by specifying as clearly as possible the research aims and questions prior to designing the research instruments; by drawing on: (2) design advice from researcher colleagues; (3) themes and language from the focus groups of staff and students; (4) approaches used in similar studies, especially the surveys of 16-19 students by King (1976) and Dean *et al.* (1979). This latter approach enabled some comparison of the results with the findings of these earlier studies (see Chapter 6), allowing an assessment of the *concurrent* validity of the measures - i.e. how far they were consistent with previous measures.

Another important strategy as mentioned earlier, was the use of triangulation, described by Woods (1994, p. 67) as '*the major means of validating ... qualitative work*'. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1989, p. 199) suggest: '*what is involved in triangulation is not the combination of different kinds of data* per se, *but rather an attempt to relate*

different sorts of data in such a way as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of our analysis'.

In trying to establish a valid or accurate picture of the tertiary colleges, it was important to cross-check the perspectives given by college documents and principals with those given by students and staff. Using different sources of data enables the researcher to corroborate data from a particular source by comparing them with results from another source - if the findings are mutually consistent, this increases our confidence that a valid picture has been achieved, and vice versa. Thus, for example, if tertiary college principals described a particular aspect of provision for students as highly satisfactory, but staff and students themselves described it as highly unsatisfactory, one would need to ask further questions in pursuit of validity. Similar issues arise if two different data collection methods produce different results from the same respondents - e.g. a questionnaire and interview study of staff views. If time had permitted, it would have been desirable to corroborate the findings of the questionnaire studies by conducting interviews with a sample of students and staff.

In addressing *reliability* issues, it is important to look at *internal* and *external* reliability. Internal reliability was assessed by item-by-item analysis of the pilot questionnaire results for internal consistency, i.e. to check that respondents had answered similar items in a similar way, for example, in the full-time student questionnaire the attitude statements on the general atmosphere of the college (items 1, 3, 8 and 14 on p. 13 of the questionnaire). A split half method of assessing reliability, such as those used for checking psychological tests, was not appropriate for the data collection instruments used in this study.

For checking *external* reliability a test/retest approach is often recommended (see e.g. Coolican, 1990), i.e. asking the same respondents to complete the questionnaire on two occasions. This it was felt would impose an unjustifiable burden on the staff and

students in the pilot college. However, it was possible to conduct a limited form of replication test to check that the results from the full and part time sample groups of pilot students produced similar results on items which were the same in both questionnaires.

Another important strategy for increasing the reliability of a research study is to approach field work in a systematic way, so that it could be replicated by another researcher. Attempts were therefore made to develop systematic arrangements for fieldwork during the 5 days spent at each college, though these were less well-developed at the first college visited than in later fieldwork. Particular concerns were ensuring that a random sample of full time teaching staff were sampled within each department, and to establish a protocol (Yin, 1989) for the administration of student questionnaires. In the first college visited, one head of department (HoD) had interpreted 'random sample' to mean people who entered his office, and had distributed questionnaires to two part time staff and a member of another department before the problem was discovered. After that, the researcher took steps to select departmental samples herself, with the aid of college administrative staff, or, where this was not possible, to brief HoDs carefully. Student questionnaires were administered by the researcher or members of staff. Administration instructions were provided on timing and points to explain to students (see Appendix 4.2), to ensure that the same protocol or set of procedures was followed in each case.

Quantitative data preparation and analysis

Data from the staff and student surveys were analysed on one of the Open University's mainframe computers, using SPSS, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie *et al.*, 1975; Hull and Nie, 1981). Technical advice and assistance were provided by the OU's Academic Computing Service. Prior to computer entry of the data, completed questionnaires were checked and coded. Each was given a unique serial number for identification purposes. Many of the questions were precoded, so only required recoding where they were unanswered, or incorrectly coded by respondents (e.g. in cases where

respondents had ringed two codes in a question requiring only one answer). Responses to open-ended questions were divided into a number of categories, on the basis of an analysis of a sample of questionnaires, and then coded, using these categories. Appendix 5 shows a sample page from the coding frame for the full-time student questionnaire, including the codes developed for three open-ended questions (nos. 20b, 21b and 22b). Data were prepared for computer entry by the OU's Data Processing Department. As is normal practice (see Weisberg and Bowen, 1977), data from the questionnaires were doubled-keyed by two different operators, to check for errors in recording the codes.

In entering the data for computer processing, data files were organized to enable subgroups to be easily analysed and compared. Thus data for matrix-structured (nos. 1-4) and departmentally structured colleges (nos. 5-11) and larger organizations (nos. 4-6) were placed in adjacent data files. It was important for the study to look at staff and student views across all the colleges, to gain a general picture of their attitudes towards the tertiary colleges. Their perspectives were explored by looking at the overall frequency distributions for the variables studied, for each sample group - staff, full- and part-time students. Also of interest in the study was how far there were similarities and differences between various subgroups of staff and students (see research question g)). For example, did staff in matrix or departmentally organized colleges, and larger and smaller colleges, show significantly higher or lower levels of satisfaction with various aspects of college life; were there gender differences in student attitudes?

In choosing an appropriate test of statistical significance, it was important to consider the *level of measurement* of the data gathered for the study. Particular statistical techniques are appropriate for data measured at particular levels. Most texts on quantitative analysis draw on Stevens' (1946) distinction between nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio levels or scales of measurement, ranging from the simplest level to the most precise (see e.g. Coolican, 1990; Nie *et al.*, 1975; Bryman and Cramer, 1990). Many of the variables examined in the tertiary colleges study were measured at the *nominal* or categorical level,

i.e. the values used served merely as labels or categories; for example, the particular college at which respondents were based, type of course attended (for students) or taught (for staff), and respondents' gender. Some variables were measured at the *ordinal* level, i.e. the categories could be ranked in terms of 'more' or 'less' of the characteristic in question. Thus, for example, the Likert-type scales used to assess respondents' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their colleges fell into this category. *Interval* level measurement assumes equal and standard intervals between the categories used; the distance between categories can be defined in terms of fixed units. Standardized psychometric instruments, such as intelligence tests, are often given as an example of interval level measurement (Coolican, 1990). In addition to the requirement for interval level data, *ratio* scales assume a true zero point, for example, measures of time, height or income. More powerful statistical procedures, parametric tests, can be used with interval and ratio level data than with variables measured at a lower level.

However, since the data gathered in the study reported here were largely at nominal or ordinal level, it was appropriate to use a non-parametric test for assessing whether differences between subgroups were statistically significant. The chi-square test of significance was selected, since it is appropriate for comparing two variables where both sets of data are measured at nominal level, or where one set is nominal and the other is ordinal (Bryman and Cramer, 1990). The two variables (for example, the colleges (numbers 1-11) where respondents were based (nominal) and staff levels of satisfaction (ordinal)) are cross tabulated in a contingency table, and the chi-square test is applied to the table. This test looks at the difference between observed frequencies and those to be expected if there was no association between the variables concerned, i.e. no difference between the categories of one variable as measured against the other variable. The chi-square test shows the probability that the observed distribution of cases would have happened by chance when no association exists between the two variables.

It is conventional to accept as statistically significant only those relationships which have a 5% (p=0.05) or smaller probability of occurring by chance, that is, the observed pattern of the variables would occur only 5 times or less in every hundred (Coolican 1990, Nie *et al.*, 1975). In this case, there is only a very small risk that the pattern has occurred by chance alone. It is deemed that one cannot have confidence in results that may happen by chance more than five times in a hundred; these results are therefore treated as not significant (NS).

The tables in Chapters 5-7 follow the convention of reporting the percentage significance level of chi-square test results (Bryman and Cramer, 1990). Thus, for example, a significance level of say 0.0278 is reported as significant at the 5% level (p=<5.0%), i.e. there is a less than 5% risk of the finding occurring by chance alone. Similarly, a significance level of 0.000278 is reported as p=<0.05%, i.e. this finding would be likely to occur by chance less than five times in 10,000. A result of 0.0000278 is significant at the 0.01% level, i.e. it would occur by chance less than one time in 10,000. It should be noted that chi-square is not a powerful statistic, in that it does not indicate the strength of a relationship between two variables. Thus a large chi-square value and a strong significance level do not indicate a stronger relationship between two variables than a smaller, but still significant chi-square value The strength of the significance level shows only the degree of confidence that one can have that there is an association between the variables.

3.3 Limitations of the study

All research requires difficult choices about areas of focus and appropriate methods of enquiry. In making these choices, the researcher needs to weigh up the advantages and drawbacks of adopting a particular focus or method against what is lost by not selecting alternative areas of focus or strategies for investigation (Johnson, 1994). Thus for example large scale surveys provide breadth of coverage, but may give a rather

superficial picture of the issues explored. Conversely, in-depth case studies provide a detailed view but cannot be generalized to other cases. Limitations in the scope of the study reported here were identified in Chapter 1.2. It was decided to focus on the tertiary colleges' provision for 16-19 year olds only, rather that other issues such as adult and community education. It was also decided to explore process factors rather than outcomes, i.e. to examine attitudes towards the colleges, not the colleges' 'outputs' in terms of such factors as students' examination results, and HE and career destinations.

During the course of the research, a number of unanticipated limitations arose. Four main ones should be mentioned here. They relate both to the scope of the study and the methodology selected. First, as discussed in Section 3.2 above, it was decided to use multiple methods of enquiry: a relatively large-scale survey of staff and student views, together with a smaller scale interview study of senior staff views, and analysis of documentary material. Such a strategy has a number of advantages, as noted earlier. However, given limited time and resources, it does hinder the extensive use of each of the methods employed. In particular, it would have been helpful to have had the scope to explore the 'organizational saga' (Clark, 1983) of each college, the history of its genesis and development. This issue could have been examined by means of in-depth interviews with principals and staff. As discussed in later chapters, significant difference between colleges emerged, and their respective organizational sagas may have been an important explanatory variable.

A second and related drawback of the study was that the leadership style of the various college principals was not explored. Like the organizational saga, this may have been an important factor in the differences between colleges. A third limitation of the study concerned its time scale. The study was conducted at a point in time and thus provided a picture of the colleges only at that particular time. A longitudinal research design would have enabled exploration of how organizational cultures develop in new institutions. The study examined the question of how far the colleges had developed a distinctive ethos at

the time of the investigation. However, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, organizational cultures develop slowly, and long term studies are needed to explore them in depth (Nias, *et al.*, 1992).

A fourth limitation was the decision to focus on internal factors within the institutions concerned. External perspectives on the colleges, for example, the views of employers, parents and other educational organizations, were not addressed in the study. As discussed in Chapter 4, environmental factors seemed to have had an important impact on the development of the tertiary colleges. The failure to consider external issues illustrates the limitations of adopting a particular perspective for looking at organizations (see Chapter 2.1) in this case an internal focus. Chapter 8 considers the insights that can be derived through examining organizations from an external perspective.

Chapter 4 The 'official' view of the tertiary colleges

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the first set of research questions explored by the study.

(a) What were the official goals of the colleges, as expressed by principals, senior staff and college documents?

(b) What forms of organization structure had been adopted to pursue these goals?

(c) Did principals claim that the colleges had a distinctive ethos?

Thus the chapter focuses on the 'official' version of what the colleges were seeking to achieve. How far this version was shared by other organizational members - staff and students - is explored later. As noted in Chapter 2.8, formal and rational system approaches may be particularly appropriate for examining the official view of organizations as expressed by organizational leaders (Scott, 1987; Theodossin, 1983). These approaches are based on the assumptions that: goals are established by organizational leaders and collectively pursued by members; that the process of implementing planned goals is rational and relatively unproblematic; and that organizational structures provide a vehicle for the achievement of goals.

It should be noted that the analysis here is concerned with the colleges' more specifically 'tertiary' aims for 16-19 students, not with objectives for adult and community education which are beyond the scope of this study. More general aims which one might find in any institution serving this age group are also not considered, e.g. developing links with HE, employers and other institutions. The chapter starts by examining the general issue

of how far principals saw their colleges as different from other types of organization and as having a distinctive ethos (research question (c)). The issue of the colleges' distinctiveness from other forms of provision is related to the mission, or broad set of tertiary goals which the principals sought to pursue. Later sections of the chapter look at the more specific goals of the colleges and their organization structures (research questions (a) and (b)), in the light of formal and rational system perspectives outlined in Chapter 2.2.

4.2 Distinctiveness and ethos

Principals described the tertiary college as a distinctive new type of organization, *'something new and different on the educational scene'* (principal, College 9). College 1's 'Aims and organization' document similarly noted: *'The tertiary college is a new institution on the educational stage'* (p. 1). The prospectus for College 3 describes *'the distinctive features of the college'* in terms of its wide range of courses, facilities, extra-curricular opportunities, and guidance provision for students. It was argued that developing a tertiary college required an innovative philosophy and approach. The new college

> *"must accept the exciting but sometimes difficult and painful process of prizing itself off the tramlines of conventional thinking and practices in the interests of evolving a new institution appropriate to our times'* (College 1, 'Aims and organization', p 1).

It was emphasized that the colleges were 'planned from first principles' (principal, College 11), rather than merely adapting the pre-existing FE college and adding sixth form work.

Principals described three main inter-related elements of the colleges' distinctiveness. First, it was noted that tertiary colleges were the only form of institution that catered for the full range of the 16-19 age group, extending the principles of comprehensive education to post-16 provision, and providing equal treatment for all students.

> *'The college aims to provide equality of status to all courses and parity of esteem to all students'* (principal, College 5).

> *'We are comprehensive - we reject "boxes" such as "academic" and "vocational" for the post-16 age group'* (vice principal, College 2).

Another aspect of the colleges' difference from other forms of provision, described by senior staff, was that tertiary colleges combined sixth form and FE traditions, by providing what the principal of College 7 described as *'a caring environment ... and a mature atmosphere, but it's not laissez-faire - we keep a watchful eye on their progress'.*

A third element of the colleges' perceived distinctiveness was that they were developing as cohesive communities, which had brought together and integrated previously separate groups of staff, students and areas of work. Principals described the importance of developing a unified identity for the college, in terms similar to Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 1 view of organizational culture.

> *' ... it was important that it should be a college for all, not a title for what might remain two sections (academic and vocational) ... we have made conscious efforts to create an integrated college'* (College 9, 'One tertiary college, p. 7).

> *'One of the great strengths of the tertiary college is that it unites the two "sides"'*, (Janes 1985c, p. 5).

It was acknowledged that developing an integrated culture might take some time, but, the principal of College 1 suggested:

> *Nowadays, I think I can say quite honestly ... the two sides have begun to "get very well ... [staff] no longer look upon themselves, I think, as vocational or academic ... [Similarly] the youngsters here don't look at each other as being sixth-formers or the "tech", they regard each other as youngsters'.*

The Tertiary College Panel booklet (Janes and Miles, 1978) provides a collective account of the purposes and provision of the 15 colleges existing at that time. The editors note the distinctive corporate identity of the colleges, based on a fusion of previous traditions. Establishing a tertiary college, they argue, entails:

> *'... the foundation of a new collegiate body, demanding some initial sacrifice of identity from all concerned, but achieving a character of its own which is neither "the sixth" nor the technical college but the tertiary college'* Janes and Miles, 1978, p. 34).

The particular character of the colleges was seen by the principals as the basis for a distinctive tertiary ethos. As discussed in Chapter 2.4, ethos can be described as the deliberate expression of the set of values which an organization seeks to promote. These articulated values reflect the organization's underlying culture. *'Each tertiary college has its own ethos ...'*(College 9, 'One tertiary college', p. 7). As Janes and Miles (1978) suggest: *'The tertiary college has the opportunity of developing its own distinctive ethos and new approaches in education ...'* (p. 2). The college ethos was often described in terms of an adult and relatively informal atmosphere: *'there's a mature ethos ... relations among staff and students are friendly and relaxed'* (vice-principal, College 1). Principals argued that the tertiary ethos was centred round the needs of the 16-19 age group, and the development of a community atmosphere where all were equally valued

Thus for example, Terry (1987) argues that the colleges *'have the sort of community feeling that engenders a feeling of equality and equal responsibility'* (p. 61). *'The atmosphere of the college [is] such that everyone is valued as a person'* (principal, College 7). College 3's prospectus noted that courses are provided *'in an atmosphere ... responsive to the interests, activities and needs of 16-19 year olds ... an atmosphere of independence and self-reliance'* (p. 2). As the principal of College 2 suggested: *'it's important to develop a new institution with its own ethos relating to the 16-19 group'.*

Senior staff also pointed to the importance of the hidden curriculum in conveying the ethos of the college to students. Moseley (1985), a tertiary college vice principal, suggests that tertiary colleges, like FE colleges, have few formal rituals and ceremonies, but the college's culture is transmitted to students in informal ways, such as the manner in which students are treated by staff, demonstrating that students have equal access to resources, facilities and recognition, and the day-to-day routines of college life. These features, Moseley argues, indicate that *'the tertiary ways of doing things are distinct, signalling a clear educational and social ethos'* (p. 70). The principal of College 4 similarly argued that it was important that the college ethos should demonstrate concern for the expressive needs of all organizational members: *'developing a supportive climate is very important ... and that includes both students and staff'.*

Thus principals and senior staff portrayed the colleges as distinctly different from other forms of organization providing for the 16-19 age group. The colleges were distinguished by their comprehensive provision and principles, which provided the basis for a tertiary ethos, focused on the needs of young people in a cohesive community where the needs of all were valued.

The principals' mission

The principals interviewed for the study provided a clear view of the colleges' distinctiveness and demonstrated a close identification with, and personal commitment to, the development of their 'own' colleges as tertiary organizations. Their role in, and attitudes towards, establishing and developing the colleges can be seen as similar to those of Schein's (1985) 'founder leaders' of new organizations (see Chapter 2.4). Eight of the principals of the surveyed colleges had been responsible for establishing their colleges. The other three had all worked within their current or another tertiary college prior to their appointment as principals, and thus had also been closely involved in tertiary developments.

As noted in Chapter 2.3, establishing a mission is a particularly important task for the leaders of new organizations. The founding principals of the colleges described their role in establishing a sense of purpose and direction for the new organizations, a vision of its nature, purpose and values. Thus, for example, the principal of College 8 commented on the vision for the college: *'That vision had a clear outline ... The outline was drawn to create a community of care and learning where the needs of the students came first'* (Report to governors, p. 2). The founding principals had a major role in establishing the mission for the new colleges for two related reasons. First, they were in most cases given a considerable degree of autonomy by their LEAs to develop the philosophy and structure of the colleges.

> *'[The Chief Education Officer] gave us [i.e. principals] a pretty free rein ... he was very clear that structures and approaches wouldn't be imposed on us ... we had the opportunity for a fresh start ... we were encouraged to be innovative'* (principal, College 11).

The principal of College 8 similarly commented with reference to the development of the college: *'How it was to be done was left to us'.* As they pointed out, most of the principals were appointed some time before the new colleges opened. *'The vice principal and I had a year to prepare ... two heads of department were appointed in the January before we opened and the other three from Easter'* (principal, College 9). Principals thus had considerable scope to develop the approach and values of the new organization, as well as organizational and staffing structures, and to contribute to the design or adapting of accommodation.

A second reason for the founding principals' important role in developing a tertiary mission was that the colleges lacked a powerful sponsor to provide a rationale for their existence. Tertiary colleges were initiated incrementally by individual LEAs, in response to perceived local needs for 16-19 provision. There were no national guidelines on the nature and purpose of the tertiary colleges. In contrast, later new types of organization, City Technology Colleges and grant maintained schools, were government-sponsored, with relatively clear expectations about their roles set down in legislation and by the DES. Until the early 1980s there were relatively few tertiary colleges. Thus as leaders of a rather small group of experimental and 'wild' (Carlson, 1975) organizations, without central government sponsorship and definition of their role, the principals of the early tertiary colleges had to establish a raison d'être for the colleges. As Selznick's (1957) analysis of mission suggests, gaining public understanding and acceptance of organizational purposes is as important as generating the commitment of members within the organization. The impact of external influences on the goals of the colleges is considered later in this chapter.

Principals noted that the Tertiary College Panel (later Association) played an important part in developing and disseminating the colleges' mission. The panel provided a forum for debating and exchanging ideas on the philosophy and approach of the colleges, and

for providing information to LEAs considering tertiary reorganization, and the wider public.

> *'In the Panel ... we are very much looking at trying to learn from each other, picking up ideas ... and we are there if anybody wants to find out about tertiary colleges ...'* (principal, College 1).

The Tertiary College Panel publication (Janes and Miles, 1978) mentioned above, provided an explanation and justification of the colleges' philosophy and mission on behalf of the then 15 colleges in existence. As the introduction notes: *In this booklet the Tertiary College Panel aims to provide a brief account of tertiary colleges as they exist at present in England and Wales'* (ibid. p. iii).

Thus the founding principals had worked individually and collectively to develop a mission for the colleges. They expressed a strong sense of personal commitment to the development of tertiary colleges, as one would expect of founder leaders (Schein, 1985). Similar views were also expressed by the three principals who had not been responsible for establishing their colleges, probably because they too had been closely involved in the early development of tertiary organizations.

In general, the views of principals and senior staff on the distinctive character and ethos of the colleges can be interpreted in terms of the formal and rational system models discussed in Chapter 2.2. These models suggest that organizations have clear and distinctive purposes, and that organizational goals are determined by leaders (Scott, 1987). As one might expect, the perspectives of the tertiary college principals were broadly consistent with these assumptions. The next section looks in more detail at the official view of college goals.

4.3 College goals

The principals argued that the features which distinguished the tertiary colleges from other forms of 16-19 organization were linked to the comprehensive nature of the colleges' purposes and provision. However, the term 'comprehensive' was often used without precise specification of what it meant. This is perhaps not surprising as there was no clear definition of what 'comprehensive principles' entailed, either for schools or colleges. Ford (1969) was unable to find a theory of comprehensive education in official documents or in the literature generally. Circular 10/65, which asked LEAs to choose a scheme for secondary comprehensive reorganization, was very vague about the nature and purposes of comprehensive schools, defining them in terms of the pre-existing system, in explaining the chief objective of comprehensive education as: to preserve *'all that is valuable in grammar school education' and to 'make it available to more children'* (DES, 1965, p. 1). Similarly, the setting up of tertiary colleges was not accompanied by any official guidance on their 'comprehensive' role. As Benn and Chitty (1996) point out: *'comprehensive education ... is still a system without any clear definition, official or otherwise'* (p. 27).

The diffuse notion of 'comprehensive education' referred to by principals and senior staff in describing tertiary college goals suggests that organizational goals may not be as clear-cut and specific as rational system approaches assume (Chapter 2.2). In examining principals' perspectives on the colleges' goals, it is useful to identify two notions of 'comprehensiveness', which one might term 'limited' and 'extended' (see Daunt, 1975). Both were used in the arguments put forward for the establishment of tertiary colleges. The limited notion conceives of the tertiary college in organizational and administrative terms as the logical next step after comprehensive primary and secondary schools, combining all provision for the full range of the 16–19 age group under one roof, giving students flexibility in choice of course, rather than having to choose between institutions (see Heley, 1980).

The extended version of comprehensiveness is based on underlying principles of social justice and ethical concerns that all individuals should be treated equally (see Ford, 1969). From this perspective comprehensive education is based on moral principles of parity of treatment for individuals and developing a fairer society (see Armstrong and Young, 1964), and a concern to avoid the separate and unequal provision, and hence occupational prospects, for different groups of young people that were present in the tripartite system of post-primary education which preceded comprehensivation. The extended version therefore emphasizes the fundamental educational rights of young people to equality of opportunity for all abilities, parity of esteem and social integration between all students whichever educational route they are following. Elements of both versions were evident in the official view of the tertiary colleges' goals. This would suggest that formal/rational system models of goals as relatively clear and unproblematic statements of agreed organizational purposes may be unduly simplistic (see Chapter 2.2).

The limited notion of comprehensiveness

The goals of the colleges, as explained by principals and senior staff and set out in college documents, made considerable reference to the more limited notion of comprehensiveness described above. This was evidenced in various ways: (1) general references to comprehensive provision; (2) an emphasis on meeting individual students' needs; (3) attention to student guidance and pastoral care.

(1) Some college documents described the colleges as 'comprehensive' without exploring the term in any detail. For example, College 4's prospectus noted that:

> *'[the college's] purpose is to provide a sufficiently wide range of courses to cater comprehensively for the needs of young people who at 16 wish to continue their education on a full or part time basis ...'*

College 3's prospectus described tertiary education and the college's role as follows:

'A tertiary college is designed to be a complete "third stage" after primary and secondary education. It becomes the sole provider within its area for the educational needs of young people over the age of 16 and for older adult students ... Thus within the [LEA's] arrangement of comprehensive education, [College 3] has a vital role, offering a range of general and vocational education courses ...' (p. 2).

(2) All the colleges stressed the importance of meeting individual student needs rather than fitting young people into pre-existing courses, i.e. a student centred approach. For example:

'Each student is an individual in the process of developing, and the college should organise resources so that it provides for each student, full or part time, an individual programme of studies, experiences and activities suited to his/her own level of attainment, ability, interests and career aspirations' (College 2, 'Tertiary education - definition and purpose').

Similarly, College 9 aimed to *'give priority to the individual and his/her needs'*. The principal of College 1 argued that an emphasis on individual needs, rather than an arbitrary separation between academic and vocational students, is an essential feature of comprehensive education:

'I'm strongly committed to the point that education should be for the <u>individual</u>; this is what I see as the real meaning of "comprehensive", because if you have a bipartite system you tend to teach the grammar school children as if they're all of

the same sort and the modern school children as if they're all of the same sort, and I'd argue strongly that each youngster is an individual ...'

(3) Linked to the provision of course programmes to meet a wide range of student needs was a concern to provide appropriate pastoral care and guidance for all students. As noted in Chapter 1, a frequent criticism of tertiary colleges, put forward by defenders of school sixth forms, was that tertiary colleges, as relatively large institutions catering for adults as well as 16–19s, would be unable to provide adequately for the pastoral care and guidance of students, as compared to the sixth form 'community' where students and staff know each other well. *'We knew that this [pastoral provision] was a potential weakness and that we must do something about it ...'* (principal, College 2).

'We aim to provide a climate of care and concern for all ... pastoral care is important to the tertiary nature of the college' (principal, College 5).

Principals noted the need to create a balance between meeting students' desire for an adult atmosphere and also providing appropriate guidance and an overview of students' work and personal development. Their perspectives reflected the tension between treating young people as *students* or as *pupils* noted by Macfarlane (1993) (see Chapter 2.8). Thus, for example:

'[The tertiary college] must be a caring institution providing unobtrusive guidance, to give teenagers sufficient freedom to discover for themselves the maturity required by independence, but at the same time maintain high standards of discipline and a positive attitude to work which will assist them to succeed in and adapt to the working world.' (College 2, 'Tertiary education – definition and purpose', p. 1).

All the colleges emphasized the importance of a strong personal tutor system, allocating groups of 12–15 students to a tutor who maintained an oversight of students' overall progress, and provided guidance on academic and personal matters. All colleges also had careers guidance systems, and in some cases also a student counsellor.

Close links with schools were also seen as an important element of pastoral care provision, countering the arguments put forward about the detrimental effects on students of 'a break at 16' (see Chapter 1.1).

> *'There must be strong links with the schools so that transfer to the college is smooth, a natural progression, and so that parents and teachers regard the system as a planned period of 11–19 education* (College 7, 'Aims and philosophy of the college').

Similarly, College 6's prospectus noted that:

> *'... there are close links too with schools, to ensure a smooth follow on from secondary to further education; these links enable the progress of every student to be recorded and their college programme to be carefully planned. To continue this system of educational guidance there are within the college extensive arrangements for tutorial control, careers and higher education advice, and personal counselling'* (p. 4).

In a number of cases the colleges provided an input to feeder schools' educational and careers guidance from the third year (year 9) onwards. For example:

> *'The careers and guidance people are in constant contact with potential students from the third form upwards. They already know many who are thinking of coming*

on to the college, so it's not that when they appear here at 16 they're strangers; often they've been seen for years by [the college's] staff' (principal, College 2).

Principals noted that organizational arrangements were designed to promote effective pastoral care, for instance, centralized student admission systems, used by most colleges, and the allocation of senior positions to staff with responsibility for student development. Thus, for example, in College 1's matrix system, the senior staff below vice principal level were 'deans' whose major priority was: *'the admission, education, personal development and care of each student in his/her charge'* (College 1, 'Aims and organization', p. 6).

The extended notion of comprehensiveness

The goals and objectives of the colleges also showed evidence of a commitment to the more extended version of comprehensiveness discussed above. This can be identified in two main areas: curriculum, where there was a concern to remove traditional barriers between academic and vocational areas of study, encouraging equality of opportunity and parity of esteem between different routes; and, secondly, in the area of social integration between students and staff. A clear example of this extended approach is in the aims and organization document of College 1 (which also provided part of the basis for the account of the philosophy of the tertiary colleges in Janes and Miles (1978) discussed in Chapter 1.2).

Here it is argued that:

'the tertiary college ... is organised on comprehensive lines. Therefore just as a comprehensive secondary school should reject a division of its pupils into grammar and modern, so should the tertiary college reject a similar classification of its students as "academic" and "vocational" ... The tertiary concept is the

comprehensive concept that a two fold classification is too crude to meet the educational requirements of young people ...' (College 1, 'Aims and organization', p. 1).

College 6's objectives also included the following educational and social goals of comprehensive post-16 education:

'The Comprehensive Principle

To apply the comprehensive ideas at 16+ as far as possible despite the widening differences of ability and interests at that age.

Thus to enrol all at 16+ in one institution, whether they are full time or part time students.

By uniting pupils from different neighbourhood comprehensives to offset any social disadvantages which may have arisen.

By mixing "academic" and "vocational" students to widen career interests of the former and raise the educational ambitions of the latter.

By including adult and overseas students to provide a more mature environment and a broader outlook.'.

College 9's aims included the development of parity of esteem and social integration between students:

- *'remove any barriers between and attach equal importance to the acquisition of vocational and academic qualifications ...;*

- *integrate the student body and enable students to feel part of the whole college.'*

(pp. 5–6)

While most of the colleges had course/subject based tutor groups, where the tutor had teaching as well as pastoral contact with the students, the principal of College 9 argued that it was important to have mixed course tutor groups in order to promote the goals of parity of esteem and a community ethos:

> *'If the tertiary college is to integrate students, then it should take the opportunities which are reasonable to arrange students in groups that emphasise the unity of the concept. And all students are seen to be equally regarded'* ('One tertiary college', p. 9).

The principal of College 11 noted the longer term social benefits of educating future managers and blue collar workers side by side, suggesting that this would help to break down traditional class barriers in industry and society as a whole. The vice-principal of College 10 similarly noted that social cohesion was an important aim of the college:

> *'It's what "tertiary" is all about – integration of the students, not in their working timetable ... but you've got to give them the opportunity to mix socially and in sporting activities and ... to give them the feeling that there aren't precise facilities that are only for academic and vocational areas.'*

While the interviewee above suggested that social integration of students should be encouraged outside their course timetable, many principals were keen to promote opportunities to take a mix of academic and vocational elements in students' course programmes – so called 'mixed economy' courses. They argued that mixed economy

courses were an important part of the concept of the tertiary college as a comprehensive institution, promoting parity of esteem between the two areas of work and social integration among students. Mixed economy courses were described as *'a special feature of tertiary colleges'* (College 7, staff handbook, p. 15). Such courses were also seen as providing equality of opportunity for students whose needs and interests were not met by traditional subject groupings. Ballard (1985), a tertiary college principal, argues for *'a tertiary synthesis'*, based on a modular curriculum, enabling students to select from the full range of the college's provision. Clegg (1985) suggests that a mixed economy curriculum in tertiary colleges is necessary to meet the needs of many students who are undecided about future career routes and wish to delay their choice of a specific path.

Many of the colleges' prospectuses made explicit reference to the opportunities to mix academic and vocational studies. Principals gave examples of mixed economy courses such as pre-nursing and O levels, A/O levels and secretarial courses, or OND with an A level in a related subject such as accounting, economics or law, foundation art with O or A level. It was also pointed out that, given the technical and workshop facilities of the colleges, O and A level students were able to study a range of technical and practical subjects not normally available in schools, e.g. O and A levels in photography, technical drawing and woodwork.

One principal argued that while availability of mixed economy courses played an important part in developing parity of esteem between different course routes within the college, external acceptability was also important:

> *'It's not so important now to have mixed economy courses, providing you have the right ethos in college ... We want to make different routes equally acceptable, to have parity of esteem between TEC, BEC and A level – we have to prove that they [i.e. TEC/BEC] are acceptable to universities'* (principal, College 9).

Another important area in which a curricular mix was encouraged was in the non-examined general and recreational studies elements of students' course programmes. Thus A level students, for example, had the opportunity to take general studies courses in such areas as electronics, workshop methods and techniques, and car maintenance, as well as a wide range of sporting and recreational courses. Principals also noted the opportunities for students from across the college to mix socially, in an informal way, in the canteen and student common room, in sports teams and college musical and drama productions.

Some examples were given of part time student involvement in the community life of the college, e.g. a part time student's leading role in the college musical, and part timers playing for college football teams. However, since part time students were often only at college for one day per week and had other priorities and loyalties, it was acknowledged that the opportunity to take part fully in the extra curricular aspects of college life was largely confined to full time students.

Limitations to the extended notion of comprehensiveness

The goals of the colleges did include elements of the extended model of comprehensiveness as discussed above. However, all principals expressed a degree of caution about pursuing, and being seen to pursue, overtly comprehensive ideals, including those who, like the principal of College 1, were the most enthusiastic exponents of comprehensive objectives for their colleges. As one might expect, they were anxious to avoid making large claims that might prove difficult to deliver: *'We must be careful not to claim too much about tertiary [colleges]'* (principal, College 11).

The principals identified a number of practical and theoretical constraints to an 'extended' comprehensiveness approach. Their perspectives suggest that apart from the diffuseness of goals mentioned earlier, there may be other difficulties in applying rational system

models to tertiary college goals. First, senior staff accounts challenge the view that organizational leaders have a high degree of autonomy in setting and pursuing organizational goals. Rather, their views suggest that institutional purposes are considerably influenced by environmental factors beyond the control of the organization (see Patterson *et al.*'s, 1986, account of the 'non rational' aspects of organizational change, discussed in Chapter 2.5). Second, principals' perspectives indicate that goals may not be pre-specified blueprints, which are implemented in a systematic way. Instead, it may be more realistic to see the process of working towards organizational goals as gradual and evolutionary in nature (Fullan, 1991; Louis and Miles, 1990), even in new organizations which start with a relatively clean slate.

A major practical factor inhibiting a curricular mix, student and staff integration, and access of students to the full range of college resources, was split site operation. All but one of the colleges surveyed had a number of sites, in some cases five or more widely spread geographically. This meant that, given the logistics of travel and timetabling, some students and staff rarely travelled to the main college building and were somewhat isolated from the general life of the college. Similarly the resources and facilities at widely spread sites were not practically accessible to students and staff based at other sites. This, it was noted, tended to constrain the sense of the college as a cohesive community. One principal of a college which occupied a large number of sites serving a disparate area, argued that this enabled the college to take education to the community, rather than expecting students to make a long journey to a central site: '*... I think this is in the true spirit of a tertiary system. A centralised glass and concrete palace is* not *the embodiment of community education provision, though it may impress visitors*' (principal, College 8). However, as he acknowledged, the multiplicity of sites acted to inhibit the development of the college as a community: '*... all these buildings and sites ... clearly are a disadvantage if what is required is a totally integrated tertiary institution*' (College 8, principal's report to the governors, p. 5).

As well as restricting the opportunities for student and staff social interaction, split site operation also constrained the scope of courses crossing academic/vocational areas. The CEO of the LEA maintaining one of the colleges included in the study noted his regret that 'mixed economy' courses had not developed as much as he had hoped:

> *'... if I were to list disappointments ... it's perhaps that the [tertiary] colleges have been extremely successful in producing very high standards of good A levels, but they have not so noticeably brought with them a mix of academic and vocational choices for post-16 students.'*

Another factor limiting the development of 'mixed economy' courses in some colleges was the perception that such a route did not fit well with career options after college and the demands of higher education and employers. On these grounds, several of the principals argued against the promotion of mixed economy courses.

> *'I've done very little deliberately to encourage it [i.e. a mix of academic and vocational elements]. It happens where it seems natural and sensible, but I don't believe in pushing it artificially'* (principal, College 6).

It was noted that students had the opportunity to explore other curricular areas in the non-examined general/liberal studies element of their course programmes. Caution was also expressed about giving students a free choice of course elements – *'total à la carte choice for students isn't a good idea; we need to give them good advice in career terms'* (principal, College 11). He acknowledged the value of mixed economy courses for a minority of students: *'it doesn't happen to an enormous extent ... the important thing is that they* can *do it'*. One of the principals who saw mixed economy courses as an important element of the comprehensiveness of tertiary colleges, acknowledged the barriers to the development of such courses, and argued that this area of provision may

have been overemphasized. Broadening the curriculum by means of non-examined options was an important alternative:

> *'The proportion of mixed economy students is about 10% of the total full time students ... you can't go too far because you have to play by the rules of the bipartite system, you can't make your own rules – the national structure of exam boards and HE requirement is a constraint ... so are student and parent attitudes – they still see three A levels as the path to glory ... Also of course for many youngsters there is a clear route [i.e. following a conventional GCE or vocational course] ... We may have made too much noise in tertiary colleges about mixed economy – it only applies to a small proportion of youngsters ... [non-examined general studies and extra curricular use of college resources and facilities] may be more important than what one normally thinks of as mixed economy'* (principal, College 1).

Caution was also expressed about the aim of social integration among students and staff. As noted above, split sites acted as an obvious constraint. It was also acknowledged that for part time students, broader involvement in the life of the college was limited and probably not generally possible. *'The full time students do mix socially with the rest of the college; part time students rarely do, except perhaps in sports and clubs and teams ... the college doesn't mean much to them, they don't feel involved or committed'* (principal, College 9). Elsewhere, in looking at areas for future developments, the same principal commented that this was something which a tertiary college *ought* to promote but was probably not widely feasible: *'We would like to see more mixing of full and part timers, but it is difficult to envisage this being widely possible'* (principal, College 9, 'One tertiary college', p. 30), though he noted the potential role of the students' union in encouraging more part time student involvement in the social life of the college.

These perspectives were echoed at other colleges:

'I know in theory you should have a perfect mix, but some of the part time students come in for one day [per week] onto a highly structured course ... so they don't have a lot of opportunity' (principal, College 5).

'You can't really pretend to integrate full time and part time students completely – nobody would – because the part time student has other responsibilities and priorities – his main loyalty is to his firm and not to this college, and if he plays for a football team, it's probably going to be the firm's team and not the college's' (vice principal, College 10).

This interviewee expressed some reservations about aspirations to achieve social integration even among full time students and staff: *'... this idea of integration is over-used; people worry unduly about it – you'll not get integration even within a department fully ...'*. Nonetheless, most principals and senior staff were committed to the aim of developing a 'comprehensive' and socially integrated community at least in the future. Thus, for example, the principal's report to the governors of one college noted this as an important objective to work towards: *'What we have not yet achieved is true tertiary integration'* (College 8, Report to governors). At another college it was suggested that: *'we now feel we've got the academic programme more or less right, it's now time to get the social and community aspects developed'* (principal, College 5,). The principal of College 11 similarly saw scope for further development of the tertiary college ethos once the college was all on one site, since he believed the tertiary colleges had already proved themselves:

'... we've shown that the tertiary college works ... it's no longer experimental ... we now need to develop its further possibilities ... it is a powerful educational idea. When we get the college all on one site in purpose-built buildings the whole conception will begin to look like a new institution – it will have physical form.

Bringing people together and a uniform timetable are the essence of the idea – we want to see everyone mixing ...'

Another principal saw the development of extra-curricular student activities as a way of developing a greater sense of community:

'We have a number of organizations and societies but not yet enough ... the growth of these extra curricular activities would cultivate a sense of belonging ... and the atmosphere of a community' (College 9, 'One tertiary college', p. 35).

The theme of gradually developing public acceptance and recognition was mentioned in several colleges; senior staff noted that a major pressure on the colleges in their early years was to produce good A level results to meet public expectations. This was a priority which tended to take precedence over and acted as a constraint on the development of 'comprehensiveness' goals, such as social cohesion and mixed economy courses. As one principal put it *'you can't produce worse A level results than the old grammar schools'* (College 8). In some cases it was felt that the colleges had to prove themselves equally or more effective than the preceding institutional arrangements before they were able to develop more specifically 'tertiary' objectives. The following extract from a paper by one principal explains how it was felt necessary to meet public concerns and expectations, as well as to provide a settling in period for staff *before* developing courses across academic and vocational areas.

'The philosophy of the first two years after the tertiary college opened was that A levels must be maintained at a high standard (for on this we would be judged), that new staff and new students should settle into the college ... but that for a period there would be no attempt to combine O and A levels with vocational courses until all staff were thoroughly familiar with the college. We could undertake development work when we could demonstrate that students did not suffer as a

result of the transfer, that standards were as high as they had been in the schools, that pastoral care was as efficient and thorough as that previously experienced' (College 7, staff handbook, p. 7).

An article on tertiary colleges by one of the principals (Janes, 1979) similarly reflects the pressures of public concerns about GCE A level results. Half the paper is devoted to showing that there is no evidence of a fall in standards at A level, comparing college results with those of the former grammar schools. Principals' acknowledgement of the importance of external expectations suggests a concern for the positional and adaptation goals identified by Gross (1969, see Chapter 2.3 above). As Gross argues, such goals are often implicit objectives of organizations but are not stated overtly.

Thus 'proving' themselves in the eyes of the public was an important influence on the evolutionary and gradualist approach adopted by the colleges. Another important reason for this approach was the principals' and the Tertiary Colleges Panel's concern to avoid becoming associated with an overtly ideological and party political position by taking a strong stand on comprehensive principles. It was felt that an evolutionary approach would be more effective in gaining acceptance for the colleges, and avoid involvement in the sort of political and ideological conflict that had accompanied the introduction of comprehensive secondary education in many areas. As one principal noted:

'... we don't claim that tertiary colleges are necessarily right in all areas ... we have taken a low-key evolutionary approach and I think it may be the best way ... Individual colleges and the Tertiary Colleges Panel have provided information for people, but we're not a pressure group, there's no aggressive campaign ... no aggressive publicity' (principal, College 1).

Thus the principals took a low key approach rather than attempting a 'hard sell' of the merits of tertiary colleges. They emphasized that the colleges were a local solution

devised by individual LEAs to meet local needs and circumstances, not that they should be adopted as a national solution to 16–19 institutional provision. An important factor here may have been the lack of official sponsorship for the colleges by the then DES or other government or national group. During the 1980s, although some individual HMIs provided help and support for the tertiary colleges, the DES was careful not to endorse or favour any particular form of 16–19 provision. Indeed, for many years tertiary colleges were 'invisible' as far as published statistics were concerned; data for the tertiary colleges were not produced separately but were grouped with those for FE colleges in general. It was not until 1989 that HMI undertook an inspection of tertiary colleges as an identified group (HMI, 1989).

While principals' perspectives on the distinctive nature and ethos of the colleges can be viewed broadly in terms of rational system and formal models, closer analysis of the official view of college goals indicates the limitations of these models as a framework for interpretation. Senior staff and college documents referred to both extended and limited versions of tertiary college goals. It was not possible to identify a clear distinction between colleges pursuing the two versions; elements of both were evident in all the surveyed colleges. While the extended notion of comprehensiveness was deemed an important tertiary objective in theory and in the long term, senior staff acknowledged a number of constraints to its realization in practice. Organizational leaders' perspectives suggest something of a mismatch between the rhetoric and the reality of organizational purposes, between goals as long-term aspirations or ideals, and what could be achieved in practice. In this respect, even the official view of the colleges ran counter to the rather simplistic rational system assumption that organizational goals represent pre-specified purposes which are implemented in a relatively straightforward way.

4.4 Organization structures

In order to work towards the goals discussed above, the principals emphasized the importance of making a fresh start in organizational terms and adopting a structure which would demonstrate to staff, students and the outside world that this was a new type of institution. *'One has to be careful that one's administrative and academic organization supports one's objectives ...'. 'Tertiary colleges have to make a fresh start; you need to take a fresh look at organization'* (principal, College 11). It was argued that organization structures affect staff and student attitudes towards the institution: *'The structure of an organization strongly influences the attitudes of those who work within its confines'* (College 1, 'Aims and organization', p. 5). Organizations structures were thus viewed in formal/rational system terms as vehicles for the pursuit of organizational purposes, including the goal of changing attitudes among previously separated organizational members, in order to build a cohesive and integrated tertiary ethos.

In most cases, the tertiary college was formed around the basis of a pre-existing FE college with the incorporation of courses which had previously been provided in the sixth forms of the local schools. A new structure was therefore felt to be particularly important to prevent the ex-FE and ex-sixth form components of the college operating as more or less separate units side by side, rather than as an integrated whole. This, it was argued, would perpetuate 'them and us' attitudes between 'academic' and 'vocational' staff and students, rather than promoting an integrated tertiary ethos across the new college as a whole.

> *'The tertiary college is a new institution ... it is not and should not be a technical college which has swallowed and decently digested the local sixth forms and then carried on as before ...'* (College 1, 'Aims and organization', p. 1).

As discussed above, in most cases the principals were appointed well before the opening of the college and were given a great deal of freedom to devise an organizational and staffing pattern for the new institution, working with LEA staff. They thus had the somewhat unusual opportunity of designing a new organization structure starting with a more or less clean slate. In one or two cases this did not happen; the principal of College 8 describes the problems that arose in this situation:

> *'... after I took up the post of principal designate on 5th January, I was presented with an undiscussed establishment, with every post filled, on 9th January. This was a far from ideal situation which crystallised and perpetuated the "grammar school/tech" divisions by creating two GCE departments on one site, and two vocational departments a mile away. Being charged with integrating a fait accompli which was directly contrary to the spirit and practice of good tertiary institutions was not a happy situation ...'* (Report to the governors, p. 5).

In four of the colleges in the survey (nos. 1–4) it had been argued that a new form of organization was necessary to develop integration between ex-school and ex-FE areas of work, staff and students. Adopting a traditional FE departmental structure, it was felt, would encourage competition for staff, students and resources between subunits of the college and promote, rather than break down, pre-existing academic/vocational approaches, attitudes and values (King's [1976] community and associationist ideologies, Chapter 2.4). These four colleges had therefore adopted a matrix form of organization, with one axis of the matrix concerned with students and their progress and overall development, the other axis comprizing teaching teams. Matrix organization have been discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.4.

The other colleges included in the survey (nos. 5–11) had adopted a departmental structure with varying degrees of modification. Principals in these colleges argued that the departmental system provides a clear and effective organizational structure that

works well. They pointed out that it was important to centralize some major functions, particularly student admissions and support, and to ensure that departments included academic *and* vocational areas of work, as opposed to continuing the ex-FE technical departments more or less unchanged and adding on GCE departments.

Principals in these colleges argued that provided one makes a new start rather than building onto the pre-existing system, management styles, quality of staff and staff attitudes were as important as structures:

> *'It's important that the identity of the new organization should completely swallow whatever preceded it, so no one ever feels there's been a "take-over" and people have equal shares ... bringing the right staff in is vital ... the style of management is important, and the quality of staff is important in achieving objectives ... it's the way departments are operated, it's attitudes of people, the ways in which decisions are made, rather than the pattern of organization itself'* (principal, College 11).

Thus changing the organization system was seen as important to demonstrate clearly to all concerned that the tertiary college was a new type of organization. Factors considered by the principals in designing an appropriate organization structure echoed many of the points made in the literature about the advantages and disadvantages of matrix and departmental systems (see Chapter 2.4). As discussed in Chapter 2, many FE colleges at the time of the study were experimenting with matrix forms of organization (FESC, 1989). For tertiary colleges, however, the matrix structure had a deeper symbolic significance, going beyond merely administrative considerations. This form of structure was seen as symbolizing the distinctive new identity of the colleges, the 'tertiary synthesis' described by Ballard (1985), or in Kanter's (1983) terms, a means of demonstrating 'organizational integrativeness that fosters innovation' (p. 148) (see Chapter 2.4). As the FESC survey (1989) indicated, a large proportion of the tertiary colleges had adopted matrix structures.

Some of the major reasons noted by principals for adopting a matrix system were:

(1) The traditional FE departmental structure, it was suggested, tends to promote an entrepreneurial and empire-building approach. Departments may operate as semi-autonomous subunits, hence making interdepartmental co-operation in mounting courses difficult and reducing flexibility of students' programmes of study.

(2) Since, at the time of the study, the status and grading of departments and the grades and salaries of their staff depended to a considerable extent on their volume of staff and student hours (as well as level of work), there was a tendency to competition for staff and students, rather than a co-ordinated cross-college approach to meeting student needs.

(3) For these reasons, a matrix system was argued to encourage more co-operative attitudes and to provide a more effective means for promoting curricular flexibility, adequate pastoral provision for students and closer integration between the various areas of the college's work.

(4) It was suggested that the organization structure should reflect the fact that a tertiary college was a new type of institution, and that a substantial change to the traditional departmental system was necessary to demonstrate to staff, students and parents that the college was not merely a continuation of the pre-existing technical college with the incorporation of the sixth form element, operating as bilateral subunits under one roof.

(5) It was argued that matrix systems enable a larger number of staff to participate in decision making and administrative responsibility.

The principals who had maintained a departmental system, with some modifications argued that:

(1) The department provides an effective and convenient means for administration.

(2) It acts as a useful 'first base' for both students and staff to relate to in a relatively large and complex organization.

(3) Such a system does not necessarily promote competition between subunits. It was suggested that it is not a departmental structure *per se* which encourages divisive attitudes, but rather the manner in which it is often operated. Given effective co-ordination by senior staff and openness of resource allocation between departments, they can work in co-operation.

(4) Nor do they necessarily encourage a division between 'sixth form' and 'FE' elements of the institution, since in most cases A and O level work was spread over a number of departments, and many staff and students worked in more than one department.

(5) It was argued that a departmental system allows for clear lines of responsibility and efficient delegation of tasks. In a matrix system, on the other hand, teaching staff are responsible to at least two separate senior staff (i.e. as tutors and subject/course lecturers). This may be confusing to both staff and students, and can lead to problems of communication and large amounts of paperwork.

The two comments below from College 3 (matrix structure) and College 6 (departmental structure) exemplify the two different views on appropriate structures to meet tertiary college objectives:

'The matrix is right, it removes some of the worst features of the traditional FE college: in relation to its intake of students, allocation of resources, staffing, staff relationships; in relation to the responsibilities and obligations which people feel towards the institution; in relation to programmes you can make available to students. I think in all these respects the matrix has nothing to touch it in any sort of departmental structure' (principal, College 3).

'I happen to feel that you've got to get clear administration and best use of resources and that is the first priority, and I don't see this as being incompatible with a proper degree of attention to pastoral care and tutorial work ... the matrix has disadvantages in terms of administrative efficiency and lines of communication, where you get this crossing of responsibilities you may have staff responsible to two bosses. The hierarchical system which is involved in a departmental structure is simpler, more familiar, more related to [FE teachers' salary and grading arrangements], and, in the end, I think, more efficient' (principal, College 6).

4.5 Official perspectives: an overview

Principals expressed a clear view of the tertiary college as a distinctive new type of organization. They evinced a strong sense of personal commitment to the tertiary mission. Their core mission was based on comprehensive education values and meeting the needs of the 16-19 age group as a whole, within an organizational context which was perceived as distinctly different from other forms of provision. This organizational context was described as a cohesive community which had brought together and united previously separated areas of work, and developed a distinctive ethos deriving from the tertiary mission. Senior staff portrayed the colleges as having developed cohesive or integrationist cultures (Meyerson and Martin, 1987).

Principals' close identification with tertiary purposes can be linked to their role as founder leaders. As founders of a new type of organization for which there were few guidelines, the principals had worked individually and collectively, as a relatively small and co-operative group, to develop a mission and sense of direction for the colleges that would secure understanding and recognition of the colleges both internally among organizational members and externally among a range of stakeholders. Founders typically have a clear vision of organizational purposes and how they will be achieved. They *'have a high level of self-confidence and determination, ... and have a major impact on how the group defines and solves its external adaptation and internal integration problems'* (Schein, 1985, p. 210). As in the case of Schein's founder leaders, the values and belief systems of the early tertiary college principals were an important shaping force in establishing the purposes and sense of direction of the new organizations.

In a number of ways the official view of the college can be interpreted in the light of the formal and rational system perspectives discussed earlier. Thus the colleges were portrayed as having a clear and distinctive set of purposes, established by their leaders. Organizational structures were seen as the means for pursuing tertiary goals. The colleges were also described as relatively cohesive and integrated organizations where overall purposes were shared by organizational members. In these respects the official perspective of the tertiary colleges conformed with the assumptions of rational models.

On the other hand, some aspects of the official view suggest that applying formal and rational system models may be problematic, especially in looking in more detail at principals' accounts of goals and structures. Rational models of educational innovation indicate that the blueprints proposed by reformers are enacted in a systematic way; the implementation process is a rational one (see Chapter 2.5 above, Scott, 1987). However, the two rather different notions of comprehensiveness that were evident in principals' descriptions of the goals of the colleges - the limited and extended versions - suggest a

degree of mismatch between goals as ideals and goals that are pursued in practice. Rather than being short-term blueprints that can be achieved easily and quickly, goals may represent longer term aspirations. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, rational system approaches tend to present a prescriptive and normative view of goal seeking, portraying what *ought* to happen. Thus, while they espoused the extended version of comprehensive goals, organizational leaders acknowledged a number of constraints to achieving them in practice, at least in the short term. There may be an 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between planned goals and their enactment. As Wise (1977) points out (Chapter 2.5 above), reformers who assume a straightforward and rational link between planned goals and their implementation indulge in 'wishful thinking'. Principals' views on the external limitations on tertiary goals indicate that organizational leaders may not have the level of autonomy in establishing and developing organizational purposes that is suggested by rational system and formal models. Rather, as Patterson *et al.* (1986) argue (Chapter 2.5 above), environmental influences may have a considerable impact on the organization's goals. This issue is explored in Chapter 8 in the context of an overview of the results of the study as a whole.

As noted in Chapter 2, applying formal/rational system assumptions about clear pre-specified goals may be more problematic in organizations where goals are diffuse than in those where objectives and outcomes can be specified in relatively clear terms (e.g. a car production factory). Tertiary college goals, particularly those relating to comprehensive principles, were broad and somewhat diffuse (Benn and Chitty, 1996), and, like the goals for comprehensive schools, were expressed in two rather different versions - egalitarian and meritocratic (Daunt, 1975). The applicability of rational system premises may also be questionable where organizational goals to some extent challenge existing social structures and norms. These premises assume that planned goals are implemented in a relatively straight-forward and systematic way (Scott, 1987), i.e. that the enactment of intended goals is not problematic. The more extended or egalitarian version of comprehensiveness is concerned with parity of esteem for students of all abilities and

social classes, and with seeking to promote a fairer and more just society (Ford, 1969). As the history of comprehensive education has shown, the goals of equality of opportunity and parity of esteem have been difficult to achieve in a social context where wide disparities in socio-economic status and social class persist, and where educational organizations are expected to perform a sorting and selection function, differentiating students destined for a hierarchy of different higher education and career routes (Kerckhoff *et al.*, 1996, Abraham, 1995). As Ford (1969) suggests:

> *'... it seems very unlikely that any of the effects for which the reformers hope [i.e. the egalitarian version of comprehensiveness] will be produced merely by continuing a programme of "comprehensive" reform. While schools continue to serve a class society, selecting and training personnel for different occupations bearing different rewards and different prestige, education will be unequal and hence "unjust"'* (p. 141).

Given the continuing disparity of esteem and separation between academic and vocational education, and full and part time study, the tertiary college goals of parity of treatment and social integration were likely to be long term aspirations rather than objectives to be achieved in the short term.

As regards organizational structures, senior managers' accounts were broadly consistent with rational system views of structures as vehicles for the pursuit of organizational goals, and structural change as a means of bringing about changes in attitudes and cultures. However, the analysis of principals' views raises two issues about the relationship between structures and goals. First two rather different organizational systems were used for the pursuit of tertiary purposes, suggesting that to assume a straightforward and rational link between structures and goals may be problematic. Scott (1987) (Chapter 2.2 above) argues that organizational structures are designed to enable the pursuit of pre-specified goals as efficiently and effectively as possible. Structures can

be adjusted to enhance their effectiveness as a means to the achievement of these goals. Principals' contradictory arguments in favour of two alternative organizational systems for the realization of tertiary purposes tend to cast doubt on rational assumptions about the design of structures as the optimum means for the achievement of organizational goals.

The second issue raised by principals' perspectives on structures relates to the assumption that restructuring brings about attitudinal change. From this point of view, creating a new organization will lead to alterations in the attitudes and values of members and hence to a new organizational culture. Such a view was implicit and sometimes explicit in principals' accounts of the distinctive character and ethos of the colleges, and of the role of organizational structures in promoting tertiary goals. However, as exemplified in the quotation from the principal of College 11 (in Section 4.4 above), a number of senior staff acknowledged the importance of attitudinal and cultural factors in bringing about successful organizational innovation. This would suggest a recognition that cultural change does not necessarily result quickly or easily from structural alterations. Principals and senior staff attributed considerable importance to structural factors, but, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, much work on organizational innovation has highlighted the central role of cultural issues, and alterations in the values and attitudes of organizational members, in achieving lasting change.

Overall, the official view of the colleges can be interpreted broadly in terms of formal and rational system models. However, closer examination of organizational leaders' perspectives suggests a number of problems in applying these models to organizational innovation, in particular to the planning and implementing of goals, and the role of structures in pursuing goals. The next chapter explores staff perspectives on the purposes, distinctiveness and organization structures of the colleges, and assesses how far staff shared the official view discussed above.

Chapter 5 Staff perspectives

Introduction

This chapter examines staff perspectives on the tertiary colleges, comparing them with the official view of the colleges put forward by principals and college documents. Much work on organizational innovation has focused on the institutional level, the official view of the change process, thereby neglecting the perspectives of organizational members (Fullan, 1991). However, as argued in Chapter 2.5, sustained and lasting innovation, 'second order' change (Cuban, 1990), entails alternations in individual and group attitudes and values, and in organizational culture. It was an explicit aim of the tertiary college principals to build a distinctive new culture and ethos.

It was therefore important to assess staff attitudes towards their colleges to see whether tertiary reorganization had become embedded. If the colleges had succeeded in developing a shared 'integrationist' culture (Meyerson and Martin, 1987), then one would expect staff views on the purposes, distinctiveness and structures of the colleges to mirror those of the principals, at least to some extent. As discussed in Chapter 4, principals' views of the colleges could be interpreted broadly in terms of rational system and formal models (with some qualifications). However as Theodossin (1983) points out, while formal models may be useful for understanding the official goals and structure of organizations they may be less appropriate for interpreting the viewpoints of organizational members (see Chapter 2.8). There is also much evidence (see Chapter 2.4) to suggest that large and complex organizations are likely to be characterized by differentiated and competing subgroups, rather than the integrationist culture espoused by the tertiary college principals. It may therefore be necessary to draw on alternatives to formal and rational system models in interpreting the views of staff. A breakdown of

the staff sample is given in Chapter 3, Table 3.2, and a copy of the staff questionnaire, on which the analysis is based in shown in Appendix 2.

Staff views are explored with reference to research questions (d)–(g):

(d) how far did staff share the 'official' view of the goals, distinctive approach and organization of the colleges, discussed in Chapter 4?

(e) what degree of integration and shared perspective did staff perceive between academic/vocational/full/part time areas of work, staff and students?

(f) how far did they perceive pastoral care arrangements for students to be effective?

(g) how far were particular forms of organization and college size linked with differences in (d)–(f) above?

5.1 Question (d) Goals, 'distinctiveness' and organization

5.1.1 Goals

As discussed earlier, much of the literature on the tertiary colleges, including the Tertiary Colleges Panel document on the educational philosophy of the colleges (Janes and Miles, 1978), made reference to the 'extended' version of comprehensive education, albeit in rather general terms. Principals and senior staff and college documents also showed evidence of commitment to this perspective as a broad ideal. In interviews, however, principals were rather more cautious about how far the extended notion could be realised in practice, in the light of external and internal constraints. Factors such as public

expectations, exam board and university requirements, split site operation and timetabling issues led senior managers to express college objectives in rather more qualified terms, with reference to the limited notion of comprehensiveness. Rational system approaches portray the link between planning goals and implementing them as unproblematic (Scott, 1987). While the official view of the colleges' goals could be interpreted in these terms, senior managers acknowledged that in practice there was some degree of mismatch between formal goals and what was achievable. Rational system models also suggest that the goals established by organization leaders are shared and collectively pursued by organizational members.

It was therefore important to examine staff views on college goals to assess what they saw as actual and desirable objectives for their colleges and whether they shared the perspectives of senior managers. Staff were given a list of 16 possible college objectives (drawn from college documents), and asked to indicate those which were currently pursued by their own colleges, and those which they felt ought to be pursued (see Appendix 2, Staff questionnaire, item 17). This made it possible to assess how far staff perceived there to be a match between what the colleges were seeking to achieve and what they *should* seek to achieve. The 16 objectives included four broad groups of college goals:

(a) comprehensive education principles (items 3, 7, 11, 15);

(b) expressive factors – personal and social development of individual students (items 1, 5, 9, 13);

(c) instrumental factors, e.g. helping students to pass exams and prepare for working life (items 2, 6, 10, 14);

(d) goals concerned with the colleges' role in serving the community as a whole (items 4, 8, 12, 16).

Results are shown in Table 5.1. Column 1 shows all those who ringed column A or columns A and B in question 17 of the staff questionnaire (see p. 345). Column 2 shows all respondents who ringed column B or columns A and B in the questionnaire; column 3, those who ringed A and B, and column 4 those who ringed neither. Rows thus sum to more than 100%. In considering percentages it is important to note that column 3 figures have been added to both columns 1 and 2. Thus, for example, in looking at column 1 figures as a percentage in each row, one needs to subtract the column 3 figures from column 2, and ignore column 3.

	1	2	3	4
Goal no.	**Is important**	**Should be important**	**Is and should be important**	**Not important**
(a) Comprehensive Education				
3	48.5	51.9	25.6	25.1
7	46.4	55.1	23.8	22.3
11	31.4	51.9	17.2	33.8
15	41.1	61.0	23.8	21.7
(b) Expressive Factors				
1	73.9	65.1	43.4	4.4
5	80.2	59.8	48.4	8.4
9	53.1	62.0	30.9	15.8
13	60.0	62.0	36.0	14.0
(c) Instrumental Factors				
2	93.5	58.0	54.7	3.2
6	68.3	58.3	37.2	10.6
10	61.5	43.7	30.6	25.4
14	77.7	57.0	45.1	10.4

(d) Community Education				
4	48.4	57.4	26.8	21.0
8	30.8	50.8	15.3	33.7
12	70.4	58.3	39.1	10.4
16	55.0	57.9	30.2	17.3

Percentages (N = 408)

Table 5.1: Staff views on extent to which college goals were/should be important

Column 1 provides an indicator of college practice as perceived by staff, i.e. the extent to which they saw their colleges as actually pursuing various tertiary college goals. The results suggest rather higher levels of positive response to factors (b) and (c), expressive and instrumental factors, than to (a), comprehensive education, and two of the four items included in (d), community education. It would seem that staff saw goals relating to comprehensive principles and some aspects of community education as having a lower priority for their colleges than instrumental and expressive student needs. Looking overall at the totals in column 1, only three goals showed three-quarters or more staff agreeing that they were actively pursued: no. 5 (relating to pastoral needs), no. 2 (enabling students to pass relevant exams) and 14 (preparing students for their chosen careers).

Column 2 gives an indication of the extent of staff commitment to, and acceptance of, various college goals. Here there were slightly higher proportions of positive responses for comprehensive education goals than in column 1. Nonetheless, less than two thirds of respondents felt that these were goals that ought to be pursued. Overall in column 2, less than two thirds of staff agreed that any of the goals listed ought to be important.

Column 3 provides a measure of staff views on the degree of consonance between goals that *ought to be*, and goals that *were* pursued by the colleges. Here there were rather

lower levels of congruence for goals relating to comprehensive education in particular than for those relating to student instrumental and expressive areas of development. For all except one goal in column 3, less than half of staff respondents indicated a match between desirable and pursued objectives.

In general, these results do not indicate a high level of staff agreement with the goals of the tertiary colleges as described by the principals. Looking at the areas explored by columns 1, 2 and 3, only three goals (in the area of goals actually pursued by the colleges – column 1) showed more than three quarters of staff agreeing. As noted in Chapter 4, principals acknowledged that, as a result of various constraints, there was some disparity between the officially espoused goals of the colleges, i.e. those that principals felt *ought* to be pursued, and those goals that it was feasible to work on. One might therefore expect staff views to show some degree of mismatch between goals as ideals and goals in practice. If staff shared the official view of college goals, this would lead one to expect very high levels of staff agreement in Table 5.1, column 2 – goals that ought to be important – with rather lower levels of agreement on goals actually pursued (column 1) and areas of match between ideals and practice (column 3). However, as column 2 shows, less than two thirds of staff agreed as desirable goals any of the items put forward by the principals.

The findings would seem to suggest that the mission established by organization leaders was not broadly shared by staff. Their views on the colleges' objectives indicate a lack of consensus on organizational mission similar to that suggested by Peeke (1994) (see Chapter 2.3). In this respect, staff perspectives were not consistent with the assumption of rational system models that organizational goals are shared by members. This would suggest something of an implementation gap (Becher, 1989) between planned goals and their enactment. Rational system expectations about the enactment of organizational purposes may be ill-founded in the case of the tertiary colleges. As suggested in Chapter

2.5, to assume a clear link between planning and implementing goals may be to indulge in 'wishful thinking' (Wise, 1977).

5.1.2 'Distinctiveness'

It was claimed by the principals (see Chapter 4) that the tertiary colleges were distinctive, both in the range of educational and social opportunities offered to 16 - 19 students, and in the particular organizational character and ethos they had developed. The study therefore explored staff views on these two issues, to see how far they shared the perspectives of principals.

Distinctive provision for students?

In explaining the goals of the colleges, the principals and organization documents studied made a number of claims about the distinctive 16–19 provision offered by the colleges. It was argued that the colleges:

(a) enabled students to choose individual course programmes suited to their own abilities and needs;

(b) enabled students to choose a mixture of academic and vocational elements in their course programmes;

(c) enabled social mixing to take place between students on different types of full time courses;

(d) enabled social mixing to take place between full and part time students.

While these were expressed as broad aims, as discussed in Chapter 4.3, some principals and senior staff acknowledged reservations about the feasibility of (b) and (d) and, indeed, the desirability of (b) which, some felt, was not necessarily in students' best interests, given employer and HE expectations. Like the views on college goals discussed above, these reservations suggest something of a mismatch between intentions and practice. However, these four features of 16 - 19 provision were described in Janes and Miles (1978) and college documents as central elements of the colleges' comprehensive role. If the principals' claims about the colleges' distinctiveness were to be upheld, it would seem important that these goals were enacted, at least to some degree.

The study sought to explore staff views on these broad aims and how far they saw their colleges as actually offering these possibilities for students. Staff were therefore asked to indicate the extent to which their own colleges offered opportunities (a)–(d) above (see Appendix 2, Staff questionnaire, question 24). In each case a four-point ranking scale was provided, ranging from 'to a great extent' to 'not at all'. Results for the overall staff sample are shown in Table 5.2.

The vast majority of staff, 86%, reported that their colleges enabled at least a fair amount of opportunity for students to choose course programmes suited to their individual needs. About two thirds indicated that there were some opportunities for social mixing between full time students on various types of course. The other two items in Table 5.2, however, showed rather lower levels of staff agreement. Only just over half, 53.7%, felt that their colleges offered at least a fair amount of opportunity for students to choose a mixture of academic and vocational elements in their course programmes. Given that some of the colleges did claim to make considerable efforts to make this possible, this result shows perhaps a lower level of agreement among staff than might be expected. However, as discussed in Chapter 4.3, not all colleges and senior staff were convinced of the value

and usefulness of mixed economy courses, given external demands, and this result may reflect the ambivalence in college principals' attitudes towards this issue.

	College enables:	To a great extent	To a fair extent	Not very much	Not at all	N=100 %
(a)	Students to choose individual course programme	32.8	53.2	12.4	1.5	402
(b)	Students to choose mix of academic and vocational elements in course programme	11.5	42.2	42.0	4.2	400
(c)	Social mixing between full time students	24.4	41.4	31.5	2.7	406
(d)	Social mixing between full time and part time students	9.6	22.7	51.6	16.0	405

Table 5.2: Staff views on the extent to which their colleges provide for various tertiary college aims for students (% ages)

Only about a third of staff agreed that their colleges enabled social mixing between full and part time students. This is perhaps to be expected since, as noted in Chapter 4.3, most part time students spent only one day a week at the college and were fully timetabled for this day, leaving them little opportunity for social interaction with other students. One must also, of course, question whether they wished to do so, since, as Gleeson and Mardle (1980) suggest, their norms and interests may be formed largely by the workplace rather than the college, and their spending power, as compared with full time students, tended to form a gulf between them as regards leisure-time pursuits.

On the other hand, about two thirds of staff reported that their colleges enabled at least a fair degree of social mixing between full time students. Full time students on various types of courses who spent all week at college, did have considerable opportunities to mix with each other during break and lunch times and in extra-curricular activities, as well as in sports and recreational activities and also, in some colleges, in general/complementary studies activities which involved students from a range of courses.

There were no significant differences on any of these four items between staff in colleges with matrix or departmental organizational systems. This result is particularly interesting as it would tend to suggest that, at least in the eyes of staff, matrix structures do not seem to provide some of the advantages that are claimed for them as against departmental forms of organization (see Ferguson, 1980, in Chapter 2.4). If it were the case that matrix forms offered significantly greater opportunities for students to choose individual course programmes and to mix academic and vocational elements in their course programmes, one would expect staff in colleges with this type of structure to show significantly higher percentages reporting that these opportunities were possible in their colleges.

More detailed analysis of these results by individual college, and in connection with the variable of college size, showed no significant differences between colleges or larger and smaller institutions with respect to item (a), the opportunity for students to choose individual course programmes. There were, however, differences for the other three items, as shown in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

These results suggest the need to qualify the comments in the above paragraph about the relationship between matrix structures and item (b). Colleges 1 and 2 showed very high levels of agreement with this item, as compared with all other colleges, suggesting that

matrix forms of organization may have provided greater opportunities for offering a mix of academic and vocational elements in students' course programmes. The other two colleges with matrix systems, numbers 3 and 4, however, showed very low levels of agreement. College 3 had a relatively small proportion of vocational work and it was not college policy to encourage 'mixed economy' courses to any significant extent; and College 4 was one of the larger institutions included in the survey. College 8 also showed rather limited agreement with item (b). As the principal pointed out (Chapter 4.3), academic and vocational areas of work were physically separated on different sites, so it may have been particularly difficult to promote mixed economy courses. It would seem that a number of variables had an influence here, and it may be that matrix organization structures did provide a greater degree of flexibility to offer mixed economy courses in smaller colleges where college policy was supportive of this development.

Again, all the colleges with matrix structures, except number 4, showed high percentages of staff reporting opportunities for social mixing between full time students. As noted in Chapter 2.6, Ballard (1980) suggests that matrix systems help to foster social integration among students. It would seem that size was again an important variable, serving to counteract the flexibility which may be offered by matrix structures in smaller institutions. College 9, the only institution in the survey which was a tertiary college from its foundation, also showed high levels of agreement here, and it may be that the absence of existing FE 'associationist' (King, 1976) traditions of students spending their time at college in relatively discrete course groups, played a part here.

Percentages reporting that their college offers the following opportunities to a great/fair extent

College Number		(b) Mix of academic/ vocational elements	(c) Social mixing: full time students	(d) Social mixing: full time and part time students
1		82.8	93.3	50.0
2	Matrix	88.0	84.0	48.0
3	structures	39.3	89.3	22.2
4		28.6	48.4	16.1
5	Larger	45.7	55.3	33.3
6	colleges	65.3	53.1	22.4
7		64.5	74.2	51.6
8	Department	38.7	55.9	32.4
9	structures	50.0	89.7	34.5
10		58.3	64.9	40.5
11		59.4	56.3	27.3
Total		53.8 (400)	65.8 (406)	32.3 (405)
(& N in brackets)				
Chi square signif.				
%age p = < :		0.01	0.01	1.0

Table 5.3: Percentages of staff reporting that their colleges offer opportunities (b), (c) and (d), by college

Colleges 1 and 2 again showed relatively high levels of agreement on item (d) - social mixing between full and part-time students - whereas Colleges 3 and 4 showed much lower agreement. As mentioned above, College 3 had relatively few part time students, and these included a number on agricultural courses, who spent much of their time away from college premises. Hence, there was relatively little scope for encouraging integration between full time and part time students.

Percentages reporting that their college offers the following opportunities to a great/fair extent

College size	(b) Mix of academic/ vocational elements	(c) Social mixing: full time students	(d) Social mixing: full time and part time students
Smaller	59.5	74.8	38.2
Larger	44.9	51.9	23.3
Total (& N in brackets)	53.8 (400)	65.8 (406)	32.3 (405)
Chi square signif. %age p = < :	1.0	0.01	0.5

Table 5.4: Percentages of staff reporting that their colleges offer opportunities (b), (c) and (d), by college size

Table 5.4 indicates that size was an important variable as regards all three of these items. In each case, staff in larger colleges showed significantly lower levels of agreement. It seems likely that the logistics of timetabling and administration as well as the size of the social units involved served to inhibit the opportunities described in items (b), (c) and (d). Interestingly, though, there were no significant differences between larger and smaller institutions on item (a), 'the college enables students to choose individual course programmes'. All the colleges offered a wide range of options and regarded it as important to cater as far as possible to student preference. It seems that size was not an important factor in enabling them to do this.

Overall, with the exception of individual course programmes, there were wide disparities between colleges, and between larger and smaller colleges, in the extent to which these

goals were being achieved in the eyes of staff. As noted in Chapter 4.3, there were a number of external and internal constraints limiting the development of these aspects of the colleges' provision. In general, staff views on the extent of distinctiveness of the colleges' provision for students suggest that this was being achieved to a lesser degree in practice than the official view indicated. This would suggest something of a mismatch between proclaimed tertiary goals and what was actually provided for students. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, contrary to the assumptions of rational system approaches, there may be no clear links between planned goals and organizational practice (Becher, 1989).

A 'tertiary' ethos?

As well as distinctiveness of provision, the official view of the colleges also suggested that they had developed a distinctive, shared tertiary character and ethos, based on comprehensive principles, which combined the best of FE and sixth form traditions, and integrated organizational members as a relatively cohesive group. As a means of assessing staff views on the extent to which this had been achieved, staff were asked to indicate, in two open-ended questions, the main benefits and drawbacks of teaching in a tertiary college, as opposed to other forms of post-16 educational organization. This provided a basis for examining how far staff shared the official view of the colleges as having developed a distinctive character. As discussed in Chapter 2.4, ethos can be seen as the consciously determined and expressed set of values which reflects the underlying culture of an organization. If the colleges had succeeded in developing a shared tertiary ethos based on some degree of cultural integration between previously separate groups one would expect this to be reflected in staff views on the advantages and disadvantages of a tertiary college environment. Staff comments were analysed and grouped into a number of broad categories, shown in Tables 5.5 and 5.6.

Benefits of tertiary colleges

Table 5.5 shows the main benefits of teaching in a tertiary college identified by staff.

		Responses	
		N =	% ages
(1)	Ideological/philosophical factors: belief in comprehensive education principles, bridging barriers between 'academic'/GCE and vocational students: integrating all abilities and social/economic backgrounds; parity of esteem	76	12.0
(2)	Wide range of *students* – ability, background, age, experience	93	14.7
(3)	Wide range of *staff* – expertise, advice, working and social contact with staff from many discipline areas and with varying educational backgrounds, qualifications and interests	55	8.7
(4)	Wide range of *teaching* possible, able to teach on variety of courses, giving variety of experience and more flexibility in what you teach	128	20.2
(5)	Mature atmosphere/mature relations with students; liberal/informal atmosphere/motivated students/voluntary attendance by students/few discipline problems	89	14.1
(6)	Good resources/equipment/facilities; more efficient use of resources than separate institutions (e.g. sixth form/tech)	70	11.1
(7)	Better pay/working conditions for staff – more time for marking and preparation	18	2.8

(8)	No/few particular benefits/little difference as regards my work/area of the college	52	8.2
(9)	Others	51	8.1
	Total	632	100

Table 5.5: Staff views on main benefits of teaching in a tertiary college.

Note: The table gives N of responses, not respondents, as many staff mentioned more than one benefit. 38 respondents gave no answer to this question.

Illustrative comments from each of the categories listed in Table 5.5 are discussed below.

1. Comprehensive education

12% of answers referred to the distinctive character of the tertiary colleges, based on comprehensive principles. As indicated in Table 5.5, item 1, these responses referred to factors related to the extended version of comprehensiveness, reflecting perspectives similar to the official view of the colleges. For example:

> *'The satisfaction of being part of an institution which does attempt to offer educational opportunities to students of widely different talents and ability [and] previous educational records ...'*

> *'I like the mixture of ability in the students and I consider this a logical extension of the comprehensive system'.*

> *'Teaching young adults in a comprehensive situation in which theoretically there is little room for the continuance of prejudice/ignorance of different groups, e.g. punk/ 'non-academic'/university entrant/middle class, working class, etc.'*

2. Students

Another group of answers referred to the stimulus of working with a wide range of students:

> *'Good range of students – age, ability and background'.*

> *'Wide range of students in terms of background and academic ability'.*

Some noted the flexibility required in dealing with a wide variety of students, e.g.

> *'Being in constant contact with people from all walks of life, the teacher is much more aware of the educational needs of his students and better able to meet these needs. He cannot retreat into an "ivory tower", but must be flexible and adaptable.'*

Another respondent wrote of the satisfaction of seeing her students' educational progress through various levels of courses offered by the college:

> *'Observing one's own students develop across the whole system, e.g. from BEC General to A levels or from adult literacy to A level'.*

3. Staff

Respondents also mentioned the benefits of interaction with a wide variety of *staff*, and the availability of staff expertise in a range of subject areas:

'Mixing with a wide variety of teaching disciplines; the interaction of academic and technological minds'.

'Opportunity to mix with lecturers of varying education, background, qualifications and interests'.

4. Teaching

Some 20% of responses mentioned the opportunities of teaching a range of courses:

'The ability to teach in more than one area of education'.

'Variety of syllabuses and teaching tasks'.

'More flexibility in what you teach, e.g. a chosen sport'.

Some mentioned the advantages of teaching their own specialist subject to a high level and/or to 16+ students only, in comparison with the teaching demands in 11–18 schools:

'Teaching one's own subject to an advanced level' (ex-comprehensive school teacher).

5. Mature atmosphere

A further group of responses mentioned the benefits of working with a relatively mature and well-motivated group of students and the consequent relaxed and informal staff-student relationships, often making implicit or explicit comparisons with schools. Like the answers in item 1 of Table 5.5, these responses suggest a perception that the colleges

had developed a distinctive character, with a mature ethos which distinguished them from schools.

> *'Less traditionally formalised than the school regime. Students are treated more as adults than as pupils.'*

> *'... a mature and relaxed atmosphere.'*

> *'Good atmosphere – students and staff relaxed, no petty restrictions, no discipline problems, good work rate from students'.*

While many staff referred to the benefits of more informal relationships as compared with school sixth forms, a few mentioned improvements in student attitudes as compared with those in an FE college, e.g.

> *'A more academic atmosphere than FE where vocational students tend to abuse freedoms, e.g. library study times, and where part time students reduce the sense of community'.*

6. Resources

About 11% of responses mentioned the greater availability of resources, or more efficient use of these as compared with systems where there are separate institutions provided for the 16+ age group:

> *'A wide range of resources in a larger institution'.*

> *'More efficient use of resources than separate technical college and sixth form'.*

7. Working conditions

For some staff, financial and work-related factors were important, particularly better pay and working conditions than those offered in schools.

> *'FE salary scales!'*

> *'Greater allocation of time for marking and preparation. Little loss of [this] due to absent colleagues, etc. Longer hours give more time and flexibility. Better working conditions.'*

8. No/few benefits

Just over 8% of responses mentioned that there were few, if any, benefits of teaching in a tertiary college as compared with other types of 16+ institution. Interestingly, virtually all staff who responded in this way were located in vocational areas of their colleges, and many had taught in the pre-existing FE college:

> *'Having taught in the college before it became tertiary, I cannot point to benefits in teaching that have come about as a result of the change'* (business and management lecturer).

Some respondents identified their location on a site away from the main college as a reason for their perceived lack of involvement in the development of the tertiary college:

> *'The main benefit of teaching in a tertiary college should be the possibility of meeting and exchanging views with staff from the various disciplines. Because of*

accommodation problems (departments on separate sites) this does not happen in this college' (lecturer in a business studies department).

A number of comments by staff teaching in vocational areas of work implied that they associated 'tertiary' development of the college with GCE provision rather than other types of courses:

'My department is concerned primarily with vocational education so the "tertiary" environment has not made much difference one way or the other' (lecturer in food and fashion department).

'As a vocational subject teacher, I feel that there is no difference or benefit derived from tertiary education' (auto engineering lecturer).

'As a teacher in a specialist field, I find it difficult to see any beneficial result from tertiary education' (engineering lecturer).

Other responses suggest that the tertiary nature of the college had benefits only for ex-school staff:

'Teaching "academic" as opposed to "vocational" subjects you gain substantially in terms of conditions and salary but in teaching "vocational" subjects there are few if any benefits' (lecturer in engineering technology).

9. Other benefits

The 'other' category in Table 5.5 covered a variety of perceived benefits of teaching in a tertiary college: for example, some staff mentioned the close relationships with feeder

schools which, it was felt, are easier to develop where there is no inter-institutional competition (e.g. between sixth form and FE college).

Others mentioned enhanced career prospects and job security in an institution of fairly large size and diversity of types of provision – full and part time, academic and vocational. Others mentioned the stimulus of being in a new type of institution or the relatively high degree of autonomy accorded to individual staff:

> *'More freedom, less restrictions, the ability to use one's own initiative'* (lecturer who had previously taught in secondary modern school, sixth form and FE college).

Also mentioned was the close contact with industry:

> *'Much closer to, and more aware of, the world of work'* (senior lecturer who had previously taught in a selective secondary technical school).

Looking overall at staff views on the benefits of teaching in a tertiary college, responses included in categories 1 and 5 of Table 5.5 – those related to comprehensive principles and the mature ethos of the college environment – do suggest that some staff shared the official view of the colleges as having developed a distinctive tertiary ethos. On the other hand, although it should be stressed that only 8.2% of responses mentioned that there were few or no benefits, there was evidence to suggest that some staff, particularly those teaching in vocational areas, felt that 'tertiary' developments had little impact on their own work, and that such developments were to the advantage of academic areas of the college and ex-school staff. Some staff held the view that tertiary reorganization had passed them by (see item 8 above), indicating a degree of loose coupling (Weick, 1976) between organizational goals and the perceptions and activities of organizational

members. This may suggest evidence of 'innovation without change' i.e. that at least for some areas of work, tertiary reorganization had little impact on activities and attitudes. Comments categorized under items 2 - 6 in Table 5.5, i.e. those concerned with a wide range of students, staff, teaching and resources, are not peculiar to tertiary colleges but are present, at least to some extent, in other organizations catering for 16 - 19 year olds.

Drawbacks of tertiary colleges

Respondents were also asked to comment on the main drawbacks of teaching in a tertiary college. Responses were grouped into a number of broad categories as shown in Table 5.6.

		Responses	
		N	**%**
(1)	No drawbacks	56	12.4
(2)	Problems relating to students, e.g. find it difficult to adapt, no prior knowledge of students, rapid turnover of students	58	12.9
(3)	Lack of co-operation between subunits of college, division between 'academic' and 'vocational' staff/areas of work/departments, higher priority status of GCE work	107	23.8
(4)	Other problems relating to organization and administration, e.g. administration top-heavy/too remote/too complex	59	13.1
(5)	Problems of size: college too large	54	12.0
(6)	Split site problems	20	4.4
(7)	Problems relating to individual lack of promotion/career prospects	15	3.3
(8)	Undue emphasis on examination results	9	2.0
(9)	Others	72	16.0
	Total	450	100

Table 5.6: Staff views on the main drawbacks of teaching in a tertiary college.

1. No drawbacks

Just over 12% of responses indicated that there were no major drawbacks of teaching in a tertiary college as compared to other types of institution. While some responses gave no further details, others indicated explicitly that the tertiary college was preferable to other forms of post-16 organization. This would suggest that, at least for some respondents, tertiary colleges had established themselves as a distinctive form of provision.

2. Student-related drawbacks

12.9% of responses mentioned problems relating to the nature and attitudes of the student intake, e.g. problems of transition from school, the diversity of student needs and levels of attainment and the rapid turnover of students, most of whom spent only one or two years at college.

Many staff mentioned the general issue of the short period of contact with students:

> *'The break in continuity in secondary school teaching coupled with the relatively short duration of nearly all tertiary college courses.'*

> *'Contact with students usually for a maximum of two years – doesn't seem very long.'*

More specific problems mentioned were the lack of knowledge of students' previous attainments and interests:

> *'Lack of knowledge of previous attainments/problems, etc. Very short period of contact with students.'*

'It takes students several weeks to settle down. Academically we can't be certain of the students' ability and aptitudes just by exam results.'

An associated problem was the wide range of previous studies and syllabuses followed by students entering the same classes at college. This raises the delicate political issue of the colleges' influence on the curricula of their feeder schools. While a number of the colleges did have active curricular liaison committees with the schools for various subject areas, others had found that these did not operate successfully. Staff involved in such committees had to tread a careful and diplomatic path to avoid being perceived by the schools as attempting to unduly influence or even dictate the curriculum. Complete curricular continuity, in the sense that all feeder schools used the same exam board and syllabi for all subjects, was virtually impossible to achieve. In any case, as some of the colleges argued, this still would not take account of the varying academic backgrounds of students who moved from other areas or transferred from the independent sector.

The open-access policy operated by the colleges was also a cause of problems especially when coupled with the pressure to achieve 'good' exam results. As one member of staff put it:

'In sociology I have a high proportion of students who do not cope easily with 'A' level material. I like the idea of not shutting the door to any student, but sometimes find the combination of a high proportion of youngsters who cannot be expected to do very well and the college's obsession with statistics oppressive, especially when sociology is sometimes viewed mistakenly as a "soft option".'

Some respondents felt that schools and pupils had unduly high expectations of the college, in terms of curricular range and provision for less motivated students:

'Impression that seems to exist in some schools that the college can do anything for anyone.'

'Too many students who have not worked at feeder schools look upon the college as the "great hope".'

Some staff noted problems of behaviour and discipline, sometimes with particular reference to less motivated and less able students.

'Attendance and behaviour problems in less-able groups sometimes causes an atmosphere which is not conducive to work.'

Such comments were not confined to staff who had previously taught in schools and were made also by ex-FE staff. It seems likely that these problems were linked to the broadening of the student intake generally at the time of the study, not just in tertiary colleges, with the extension of vocational preparation courses and other provision for the young unemployed. Discipline and behaviour problems among 'non-traditional' students on such courses, who were sometimes not highly motivated, were not restricted to tertiary colleges, and have been reported in other types of institution serving the 16–19 group (see, for example, Dale, 1985), particularly FE colleges which were major providers of vocational preparation courses.

It should also be remembered that most of the other drawbacks mentioned above – lack of knowledge of students, short period of contact with them, lack of curricular continuity – were not confined to tertiary colleges but confront all types of institution which entail a break at 16+. All-through 11-18 schools do not encounter such problems but the FE colleges which co-exist with them do and, indeed, have always done so. Problems of lack of knowledge about students' aptitudes and interests could be alleviated to some

extent by transfer of detailed records from the schools, and by staff liaison between school and college. However, this raises difficulties of resources, time constraints, the question of the extent of which contributory schools were prepared to co-operate, and the issue of how far this was in the interests of the individual students – for some, details of school careers may be better left behind. Also, even where there was close liaison with schools, it was obviously not possible for the majority of staff to be involved in contact with intending students, and the selection and recruitment of those who they would later teach.

3. and 4. Organizational drawbacks

Over a third of responses mentioned drawbacks connected with lack of co-operation between the subunits of the college (23.8%) or other organizational issues (13.1%).

Some respondents referred to the general issue of the lack of overall cohesion in the college and absence of co-operation between subunits.

> *'Lack of communication between departments, on students and course development.'*

> *'Lack of adequate liaison between divisions because of the size and complexity of the structure.'*

Quite a large proportion of responses referred more specifically to divisions between academic and vocational areas of work, both in terms of college organization and the related issue of attitudinal differences between staff involved in the two areas.

'I think that to regard a tertiary college as something "new" and "special" is a mistake. It is simply a traditional technical college and a sixth form college housed under one roof.'

'Division of "academic" and "vocational" teaching.'

'Basically split between vocational FE and GCE – hence fight for resources.'

Despite the fact that all the colleges surveyed had been 'tertiary' for at least five years, historical divisions and the past careers of staff in separate institutions continued to exert a powerful influence, supported by separate course structures and the need for separate accommodation for 'academic' and 'vocational' areas of work. The following comment from an SL responsible for teaching secretarial studies to both 'A' level and BTEC students suggested the need for more interaction and 'cross-fertilization' between the two areas of work.

'It is regretted that such a division exists between vocationally relevant education and pure academic education. The students are divided by the courses and physical siting of team areas within the college. Many students do not know how their fellow students study. Staff, too, are divided, mainly by accident of the history of their careers prior to the formation of the tertiary college. Staff could be encouraged to "cross-fertilise" far more than they are, to promote understanding and goodwill. One is left with the impression that two areas of study have been amalgamated in an arbitrary manner; that the combination is tenuous, and that nothing much will change.'

On the question of attitudinal barriers, a few staff teaching GCE courses felt that those in technical and vocational areas were not as co-operative as they might be:

'Technical staff seem disinclined to be co-operative with academic staff.'

However, a more frequently expressed problem was the complaint from staff in vocational areas of work that 'academic' staff enjoyed a higher status, and GCE work was of higher priority in the college.

'A level work appears to be more prestigious. The old problem of vocational versus academic work.'

'Concentration on academic subjects to the detriment of vocational areas.'

Although the matrix form of organization had been introduced by a number of colleges in order to break down academic/vocational barriers, some staff teaching in vocational areas felt that this system operated to the disadvantage of their field of work:

'The structure of the college management favours academic courses by enabling a large number of individual subjects to be taught. This is done at the expense of vocational courses: segregation of staff into subject teams makes the running of vocational courses difficult ...'

'The matrix, while giving a very wide variety of A level subjects, is not suited to vocational courses as well as the FE departmental system.'

A number of responses referred to other general problems relating to organization and administration in the college. Frequently mentioned issues were: a lack of communication between senior and junior staff and in the college generally, complexity of administrative procedures, bureaucratic structures, remoteness of senior staff, and lack of involvement of junior staff in decision making.

'Poor communications, rather bureaucratic, lacking flexibility.'

'Committee structures are too bureaucratic.'

'Too many chiefs and not enough indians.'

Although matrix structures are argued to facilitate involvement in decision making by a greater range of staff, many comments about lack of participation and consultation, such as the one above, were made by staff in colleges with matrix structures. Although this form of organization distributes formal middle management responsibilities more widely than departmental systems, this does not necessarily mean that more junior staff regard themselves as having an adequate level of involvement in decision making. On the issue of general organizational and administrative drawbacks, such criticisms are not specific to staff in tertiary colleges and have been noted in other types of institution, serving the 16-19 age group (see, for example, Bradley and Silverleaf, 1979). On the other hand, the problem of divisions between academic and vocational areas of work was an issue which confronted tertiary colleges in particular, since one of their major objectives was to avoid such divisions. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 5.2 below.

5. and 6. Size and split sites

Many responses referred specifically to drawbacks resulting from the large size of the college, and/or split site operation. It was felt that these factors gave rise to various organizational, administrative and practical drawbacks, as well as lack of integration among the various groups of staff and students in the college.

'Logistics of administering the curriculum, especially on three sites, are enormously difficult.'

'Large size, leading to: lack of contact with other departments; lines of communication unclear/too long; multiplicity of courses and general stress.'

Staff in smaller colleges (i.e. group 5 and below), as well as the larger ones, commented on the drawbacks associated with size. Their perceptions of the size and complexity of the college were coloured by their experiences of working in smaller institutions, and there was no clear relationship between group size of the college and the incidence of staff comments on this issue. Any increase in size tends to be perceived as a drawback, associated with poor communications, complex and bureaucratic structures and lack of integration between staff and student groups as a whole. It is interesting, though, to note the ambivalence in staff perceptions on this variable. While size per se was not mentioned as a benefit of teaching in a tertiary college (see Table 5.5 above), many of the *advantages* noted above are contingent on relatively large organizations, particularly a wide range of equipment, resources and facilities and the efficient use of these. Similarly, many respondents saw the wide variety of staff, students and teaching as a benefit of the tertiary college. The larger the college, the wider the range of these is likely to be.

7. Lack of promotion prospects

Some respondents mentioned lack of career/promotion possibilities as a drawback. Since tertiary colleges were almost entirely engaged in non-advanced work (i.e. lower level courses), the opportunities for promotion through teaching higher level work, which were available in colleges with a proportion of higher level courses, were not open to staff in tertiary colleges. This was seen as a particular drawback by staff in colleges where the tertiary reorganization had entailed the removal of higher level work. Some staff also found it hard to accept the system adopted by a number of colleges, whereby promoted posts were allocated on a college-wide basis, according to need, rather than at

subunit level. There was some feeling that points 'earned' by particular areas of the college should be used to the direct benefit of that area, as in a traditional departmental system:

> *'Not having a departmental structure, the points gained by certain sections of the college do not necessarily result in promotions, etc. in that section.'*

In fact, though, most of the colleges with departmental structures did exercise restraint on the entrepreneurial expansion of particular departments, and were concerned to maintain some degree of rough parity between areas of work, if necessary by moving new and expanding areas to other departments, to avoid the development of one or more very powerful subunits dominating the work of the college as a whole. The colleges thus sought to avoid the pursuit of sectional interests that may occur in large semi-autonomous departments which have a vested interest in expansion (see Chapter 2.2).

8. Exam results

Some responses referred to drawbacks stemming from the college's emphasis on exam results (especially GCEs), and the pressures on a pioneer institution of having to be seen as successful by the parents, LEA, governors, the community and the world at large (as a number of respondents pointed out, these groups tended to measure 'success' by exam results).

> *'Too much emphasis upon A level results – if these are above the national average – everything is fine! ... The first two/three years of transition from technical (FE to tertiary) were traumatic for staff. The desperate need to prove that tertiary academic results are better than anything produced by the former*

grammar schools caused a lot of unnecessary stress. It is still to some degree present in the institution!'.

The pressures on staff to build and maintain a good reputation for the new institution and to show that exam results were equal to or better than those of other types of institution seems to have been considerable in the early years of the colleges' existence. As Patterson *et al.*'s (1986) 'non-rational' model of the change process indicates (see Chapter 2.5 above), environmental expectations may have a strong impact on organizational activities. External pressures were also noted by the principals (Chapter 4.3) as an important influence on the colleges' development.

In general, staff views on the drawbacks of teaching in a tertiary college do not support the principals' perceptions of the colleges as having developed a relatively integrated and distinctive new ethos. Although 12% of answers indicated that there were no drawbacks, other responses suggest a lack of co-operation between subunits, and divisions between academic and vocational areas of work, with a perception that some areas had benefited more than others from tertiary reorganization.

Attitudes of staff not involved in reorganization process

Another factor in assessing staff perceptions of the extent of distinctiveness of tertiary colleges was the attitude of the subgroup of staff who had joined the college post-reorganization or from outside the institutions which merged to form the college. Many staff had of course joined their colleges as part of the reorganization process, from the pre-existing FE college or schools. They were thus members of the college at least partly through force of circumstances. Those who had joined the college from outside the area or post-reorganization had made a positive choice to come and work at the college. It was therefore of interest to discover whether the 'tertiary' nature of the college

was a factor in their choice of post there, i.e. did they see it as offering a distinct and different type of provision from other post-16 institutions? 48 staff had joined their college in its first year as a tertiary, from outside the reorganized institutions, and 161 had joined after its first year.

These groups were asked how far their decision to apply for a post at their current institution was influenced by the fact that it was a *tertiary* college. This was seen as an indicator of the extent to which such staff were committed to the principle of tertiary colleges; it may be that many such staff were motivated primarily by other factors such as promotion, environmental conditions, house prices, schooling for their children, rather than any intrinsic desire to work in tertiary colleges as opposed to, say, FE, sixth form colleges or comprehensive schools. Results are shown in Table 5.7. They would seem to indicate that the tertiary nature of the college did not play an influential part in respondents' decision to apply for a post, and that other factors such as those above may have played a part. Less than a third of respondents rated this as having a great deal or a fair amount of influence on their decision to apply there. If these staff had a clear perception of the tertiary colleges as a distinctive form of provision one would expect a higher proportion to have reported that this factor had at least a fair amount of influence on their decisions.

	N =	**%**
Not at all	99	50.0
Not very much	36	18.2
A fair amount	37	18.7
A great deal	26	13.1
Total	198	100

Table 5.7: Extent to which tertiary nature of college influenced respondents' decision to join current institution

How far were the colleges perceived as distinctive?

Looking overall at the issue of the colleges' distinctiveness, it would seem that staff perceptions of this were rather mixed. There was some evidence to suggest that some staff shared the principals' perceptions of the colleges as having developed a distinctive form of provision and a shared 'tertiary' ethos. Staff views on provision for students (see Table 5.2) indicate that they perceived their colleges as providing opportunities for individual course programmes and some degree of social integration among full time students. Mixed economy courses and social mixing among full- and part-time students were seen as less fully developed. Staff views on the colleges' advantages and disadvantages suggest some evidence of a distinctive ethos and atmosphere, as indicated in responses referring to comprehensive principles, a mature atmosphere (see Table 5.5, items 1 and 5), and the absence of disadvantages compared with other forms of post-16 provision (see Table 5.6, item 1).

On the other hand, some respondents perceived few or no benefits (Table 5.5, item 8), and views on the colleges' drawbacks indicated perceptions of sectional interests, and practical and attitudinal barriers between academic and vocational staff and areas of work, indicating a degree of cultural differentiation among various sub groups of staff. There was also evidence of loose coupling (Weick, 1976) between tertiary goals and the activities of some staff, particularly in vocational areas of the colleges. Some teachers felt that tertiary developments had passed them by, having little impact on their own work. These factors would tend to suggest that many staff did not perceive the colleges as having developed the distinctive, integrationist (Meyerson and Martin, 1987) culture and ethos described by the principals.

Many of the perceived benefits of tertiary colleges (e.g. wide range of students, staff, teaching) are not specific to tertiary colleges and might be applied to varying degrees to

other forms of post-16 education, although arguably they are evident to a greater extent in tertiary colleges since they encompass the full range of 16+ provision and students. A similar point might be made about a number of the disadvantages of the colleges – e.g. organization issues, large size and split-size operation – again, these are not factors particular to tertiary colleges. Staff attention to these issues suggests that some teachers did not perceive the colleges as distinctly different from other types of organization. Staff reasons for joining their colleges (Table 5.7) might be interpreted in a similar light.

In general, if the colleges had developed a shared new ethos, one would expect staff views to have provided a clearer picture of the colleges' distinctiveness, and a perception of at least some degree of integration among staff subgroups, mirroring the principals' perspectives. The objectives of breaking down barriers between previously separated areas of work and building a shared ethos did not seem to have been achieved to the extent suggested by the official view of the colleges. There is considerable evidence to suggest that cultures in large, complex organizations are likely to be characterized by differentiation rather than integration (see Chapter 2.4). Also, as discussed in Chapter 2.5, attitudes and cultures are slow to change and are not transformed merely by organizational restructuring (Fullan, 1991, 1993).

5.1.3 Organization

The study examined staff perspectives on two main aspects of the organization of their colleges:

(a) Organization structures, and how for staff shared principals' views on the role of structures, and the merits and disadvantages of matrix and departmental systems.

(b) Staff's perceived levels of involvement in decision making. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, participation in decisions is an important factor in successful organizational change, promoting staff ownership of, and commitment to, organizational purposes, and the development of collaborative cultures (Fullan, 1991; NCE, 1996).

(a) Organization structures

As noted in Chapter 4.4, principals gave considerable attention to the design of appropriate organization structures. Their portrayal of the role of structures could be interpreted broadly in terms of a rational system approach - i.e. structures were seen as a vehicle for bringing about organization change, including changes in attitudes, and thus helping to build a new tertiary culture. It was therefore important to assess how for staff shared this view of structure.

A related issue was the appropriate *type* of structure. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, the principals took different views on this question. Four of the colleges included in the study had adopted matrix structures, the other seven used departmental structures with various forms of modification. Those principals who had adopted matrix forms of organization argued strongly that a new form of organization was important to show that the tertiary college was a new type of institution, and that new structures were essential to breaking down academic/vocational barriers. It was also suggested that matrix systems were better able to meet prospective students' needs and to promote effective liaison with schools, since they enable the provision of impartial advice to students, whereas, it was argued, departments have a vested interest in recruiting students themselves, rather than referring them to other, perhaps more appropriate, areas of the college. Other principals argued that the traditional FE departmental structure was flexible enough to accommodate new areas of work, that it provided clearer lines of

responsibility than a matrix, and hence more effective and efficient administration, and would not perpetuate pre-existing divisions. As for providing effective liaison with feeder schools, it was argued that the centralized admissions systems adopted by most of the departmentally-organized colleges helped to reduce, if not completely eliminate, the problem of biased advice to intending students.

The study therefore sought to examine the views of staff on the operation of the two types of organization structure to assess how far the claims for and against matrices and departments were borne out, in practice, in the experience of staff. Respondents were presented with a number of statements about the pros and cons of organization structures, drawn from the literature and from staff comments in the pilot phase of the study. They were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each comment as applied to the organization structure of their own college. Positively and negatively worded comments were used and intermixed in order to avoid problems of 'response set' (Coolican, 1990). Four categories of response were provided, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The comments were as follows:

(1) *'Effective channels of communication.'*

(2) *'Lack of clear lines of responsibility.'*

(3) *'Enables a flexible approach, across the whole college, to meeting student needs.'*

(4) *'Little co-operation between departments/subunits.'*

(5) *'Provides effective liaison with contributory schools.'*

Items 1 and 4 identified a claimed advantage and disadvantage of departmental systems, and items 3 and 2 a claimed strength and weaknesses of matrix systems (see Ferguson, 1980, in Chapter 2.4). Item 5 was concerned with an important organizational issue for all colleges. If the claims made in the literature and by principals about the respective advantages and disadvantages of departmental and matrix systems were endorsed by staff, one would expect this to be reflected in their responses to items 1 - 4. Thus, for example, staff in colleges with departments would tend to agree with items 1 and 4. Overall responses are shown in Table 5.8.

		Percentages				
		Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**N=100 %**
1.	Effective channels of communication	6.3	39.8	39.1	14.8	399
2.	Lack of clear lines of responsibility	12.6	36.1	42.7	8.6	396
3.	Enables a flexible, cross college approach to meeting students' needs	9.3	50.6	32.2	7.8	397
4.	Little co-operation between departments/subunits	16.0	37.0	39.7	7.2	400
5.	Provides effective liaison with contributory schools	12.3	57.3	24.9	5.0	398

Table 5.8: Organization structure comments: staff agreement/disagreement, as applied to their own colleges

These results do not demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with the organization structures of respondents' colleges. They suggest that there may be problems in applying rational-system assumptions, about structures serving organizational purposes, to the perspectives of staff. The role of structure in integrating individual motivation and organizational requirements (Hoy and Miskel, 1991) was not evident in staff perceptions. Although FE staff are notoriously critical of the 'administration' and the 'hierarchy' (see, for example, Gleeson and Mardle, 1980), one might have expected a rather higher percentage of positive responses in relatively new organizations where structure had been recently and carefully designed to meet college needs. Liaison with feeder schools showed the highest proportion of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing – 69.6%. Other characteristics of the sample colleges' organization structures were rated rather less positively: 59.9% saw their system as providing a flexible cross college approach to provision, though 53% agreed that there was little interdepartmental/subunit co-ordination, 48.7% agreed that their colleges' organization structure lacked clear lines of responsibility and only 46.1% agreed that the structure provided effective channels of communication.

There were no significant differences on these five items between age groups, male and female respondents, graduates and non-graduates, and senior and junior staff. This last result is somewhat surprizing since one would expect that senior staff, themselves forming part of the 'hierarchy', would express more positive views than junior staff. If one considers this similarity between junior and senior staff perspectives, alongside the very marked inter-college differences (shown in Table 5.9), it would seem likely that a major distinguishing variable was the individual colleges themselves, their organizational culture, and the way that structures were operated, rather than any inherent merits and disadvantages in these structures.

	% agree/strongly agree Item no.				
College No.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	73.3	40.0	86.7	37.9	58.6
2	39.1	43.2	96.0	25.0	79.2
3	85.7	29.6	77.8	18.5	84.6
4	7.9	75.0	40.3	79.7	67.2
5	57.4	54.3	56.5	43.8	71.7
6	30.6	41.7	49.0	63.3	65.3
7	34.5	39.3	51.7	41.4	58.6
8	36.4	50.0	32.4	61.8	82.4
9	80.0	36.7	69.0	37.0	86.7
10	74.3	29.7	77.8	64.9	73.0
11	31.3	69.0	60.0	62.5	48.4
Total	46.1	48.7	59.9	53.0	69.9
Chi square signif. %age p = < :	0.01	0.1	0.01	0.01	2.5

Table 5.9: Organization structure comments: staff agreement by college

Item No				**High**						**Low**			
1	(85.7)	3	9	10	1	5	2	8	7	11	6	4	(7.9)
2	(75.0)	4	11	5	8	2	6	1	7	9	10	3	(29.6)
3	(96.0)	2	1	3)10)		9	11	5	7	6	4	8	(32.4)
4	(79.7)	4	10	6	11	8	5	7	1	9	2	3	(18.5)
5	(86.7)	9	3	8	2	10	5	4	6	1)7)		11	(48.4)

Table 5.10: Organization structure comments: staff agreement by colleges in rank order

College size	**% age agree/strongly agree**				
	Item no.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Smaller	57.1	42.0	67.9	45.6	71.3
Larger	29.6	58.9	47.8	64.0	67.9
Total	46.1	48.7	59.9	53.0	69.9
Chi square signif.					
% age p = <	0.01	0.5	0.1	0.1	NS

Table 5.11: Organization structure comments: staff agreement by college size

Interestingly, despite the debate on the relative merits of matrix and departmental structures, there were no significant differences between staff views in colleges operating these different structures. There was also no clear pattern of association between the claimed merits and limitations of the two types of structure identified in items 1- 4, and staff responses in departmentally and matrix structured colleges. Indeed, as Tables 5.9 and 5.10 show, one of the four colleges operating a matrix structure (1, 2, 3 and 4) showed rather high levels of satisfaction on the five items (College 3), whereas another institution with a matrix organization showed particularly low levels, as compared with the others (College 4). Similarly departmentally organized colleges (numbers 5–11) showed a wide diversity in levels of positive response on the five items. These results would, again, tend to support the view that factors associated with individual colleges played a major part in influencing staff views; and that it is not the type of organization structure per se that is important but the way in which it is operated.

There were, however, differences between larger (numbers 4, 5 and 6) and smaller colleges as shown in Table 5.11. Staff in smaller colleges were significantly more likely to express some positive views (i.e. higher percentage agreement on positively worded items, numbers 1 and 3, and lower percentage agreement on negatively worded items,

numbers 2 and 4) on each of items 1–4. There were no significant differences between larger and smaller colleges on item 5, relating to effective liaison with contributory schools. These results would tend to suggest that larger colleges may have had particular difficulties in terms of staff levels of satisfaction with the organization system, whatever structure was used. Research has shown that large schools encounter understandable problems as regards communication, lines of responsibility and co-ordination between subunits, especially when there are split sites (see, for example, Bush, 1995). It may be that larger tertiary colleges, which in dealing with the 16–19 age group were performing similar tasks to those of school sixth forms, requiring a considerable degree of subunit co-operation, were likely to encounter problems rather akin to those of very large schools. It must of course be remembered though that it is not possible to generalize from a sample which included only three larger institutions, and that one of the latter, College 4, reflected particularly low levels of staff satisfaction for the four items for which there were significant size differences. These results can therefore provide only indications, rather than conclusive evidence, of variables that may have influenced staff perspectives on their colleges' organization structure.

(b) Participation in decision making

The study investigated teachers' actual and preferred levels of involvement in decision making. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, participation in policy making tends to be associated with staff ownership of decisions (Fullan, 1991), and positive staff attitudes towards decision making structures and overall organizational goals (Mortimore *et al.*, 1988). Participatory processes also help to develop a shared organizational culture and ethos (NCE, 1996). Since decision involvement tends to increase staff commitment to the organization, one might expect greater levels of perceived involvement in those colleges where staff levels of satisfaction with organization structures were higher. It has been argued that matrix structures devolve decision making responsibilities to a broader

range of staff (see Fidler, 1997), so one might also expect staff in colleges with matrix structures to show higher levels of perceived decision making involvement than those with departmental structures.

However, it is important here to distinguish between what Conway (1980) has called objective and subjective participation. The existence of relatively objective and measurable formal and informal structures and channels for staff participation in decision making does not entail that staff do participate or that they view their involvement (if it takes place), *'as psychologically real in that the effects are felt by the individual'* (Conway, p. 213). It is therefore important to examine staff views on their perceived levels of involvement.

It is also important to recognize that teachers' preferred involvement in decision making varies according to the decision area in question and that there may be no congruence between perceived and preferred levels of participation, i.e. high perceived levels of involvement in a particular decision area are not necessarily related to staff satisfaction with existing participation, and, conversely, a low degree of involvement is not necessarily linked with a preference for greater participation (Dennison and Shenton, 1987). Conway (1980) found that the degree of difference between actual and desired involvement on most of the decision areas he examined was quite low (see Chapter 2.5 above). However, on some areas (staff appointments, building plans, budgets and teaching timetables) there was a medium or large discrepancy between actual and preferred extent of staff participation. In each case, staff were 'decision deprived', i.e. they would have preferred greater involvement.

As noted in Chapter 2.5, desired levels of involvement may also vary among different groups of staff, according to age, career stage and other factors, including whether decision-involvement is seen as voluntary or imposed – 'contrived collegiality'

(Hargreaves, 1992). Thus one must not assume that the decentralization of decision making will always increase the job satisfaction of teachers. Another important variable is, of course, staff position within the institutional hierarchy. Conway's study found strong evidence that this was a major influence on perceived levels of involvement: '... *with a high degree of assurance, we can assert that the higher persons are in the status hierarchy ... the more they find themselves involved in ... decision making*' (pp. 221–2). It might also be expected that more senior staff would show higher levels of satisfaction than junior staff with their existing extent of involvement in decision making, i.e. a close match between actual and preferred levels of involvement.

Of course it must be remembered, in examining evidence from school studies of participation, that structures and patterns of decision making are rather different from those in FE or tertiary colleges. In particular, departments (or alternative administrative subunits) in the FE sector are usually larger, and more autonomous than their counterparts in schools, and form an important level of decision making, relatively discrete from the arena of policy making at institutional level which takes place under the auspices of the senior management and academic board (see, for example, Kogan, 1984). The current study therefore examined participation in decision making at both departmental and institutional levels, in a number of decision areas. It looked at the extent to which this varied among subgroups of staff, in colleges of varying size and organization systems. Decision involvement provides an indicator of staff levels of satisfaction with the organization, and commitment to organizational purposes. Where there is a close match between actual and preferred involvement, staff levels of satisfaction are likely to be higher than where there is a mismatch.

Departmental level decision making

The questionnaire listed seven main decision making areas, and respondents were asked to indicate their own perceived and preferred involvement in each area. Results are shown in Tables 5.12 and 5.13.

		Level of involvement: % ages			
Decision making area		**A great deal**	**Some**	**Little/none**	**N = 100%**
(1)	Course planning	36.4	36.4	27.2	407
(2)	Course content/syllabus	42.8	33.5	23.7	409
(3)	Teaching methods	53.7	27.1	19.1	402
(4)	Exams and assessment	56.2	34.6	9.1	405
(5)	Student pastoral matters	27.6	44.4	27.9	405
(6)	Routine administration	40.6	42.5	16.7	406
(7)	Allocation of financial resources	13.0	27.9	59.1	408

Table 5.12: Staff perceived levels of involvement in departmental decision making

Results showed that for the staff overall, relatively high proportions had at least some involvement in most of the decision areas. Over three-quarters perceived themselves as participating a great deal or to some extent in decisions about course planning and content, and student pastoral matters. Over 80% had at least some involvement in matters relating to teaching methods, exams/assessment and routine administration. The exception here was financial resources, where nearly 60% of staff saw themselves as having little or no involvement in decisions about allocation of these. As Gray (1984) points out the issue of financial resource allocation is an area of 'extreme sensitivity' in

colleges, often characterized by interdepartmental competition, and consequent political processes, secrecy and suspicions. While this is perhaps understandable at institutional level where departments are competing for limited resources, one might, nonetheless, expect a higher level of perceived participation in the process at departmental/subunit level.

		Preferred involvement: % ages			
Decision making area		**Would prefer more**	**Current level OK**	**Would prefer less**	**N = 100%**
(1)	Course planning	35.8	64.0	0.3	383
(2)	Course content/syllabus	32.2	67.5	0.3	382
(3)	Teaching methods	19.6	80.1	0.3	377
(4)	Exams and assessment	12.5	79.2	8.3	375
(5)	Student pastoral matters	19.4	77.7	2.9	377
(6)	Routine administration	12.5	60.1	27.3	384
(7)	Allocation of financial resources	40.7	58.7	0.5	383

Table 5.13: Staff preferred levels of involvement in departmental decision making

In comparing actual and preferred levels of involvement it is evident that, although a relatively high percentage (i.e. over 75%) of respondents had at least some perceived involvement in course planning and course content, nevertheless about a third of respondents would have preferred a greater degree of participation in these decision areas. It may be that staff were particularly concerned to take part in decisions which closely affected their central function of teaching. Similar results were found for matters relating to teaching methods and student pastoral matters, nearly a fifth of staff in each case preferring a greater extent of involvement, though teaching methods showed the

highest percentages of staff satisfied with their current level of decision involvement (80% approximately). The decision area of exams/assessment also showed a high proportion of staff satisfied with their current level of involvement (79.2%), though the rest of respondents were rather more divided about preferred levels of participation, with 12.5% wanting more and 8.3% less. In comparison, less than 1% of respondents wanted less involvement in the decision areas of course planning, content and teaching methods. As might be expected, the decision areas of routine administration and financial resources showed the lowest percentages of satisfaction with current level of participation: about 60%. In the case of the former area, 12.5% wanted more involvement and over a quarter would prefer less. In the case of finances, less than 1% wanted less involvement and just over 40% wanted more. This probably reflects the nature of these functions: while the decision area of routine administration was likely to be seen as concerned with rather mundane, trivial and monotonous matters, the issue of financial allocation was seen as being of greater importance and little current involvement, in which a considerable proportion of staff would have liked to take a more active part.

In general, perceived levels of participation in course planning, content, teaching methods and pastoral matters were relatively high, with proportions preferring more involvement also relatively high. Current levels of involvement in exams/assessment and routine administrative decision area were also relatively high, though in the former case roughly equal proportions would have preferred greater and lesser involvement, in the latter over a quarter would have preferred less. Financial resources showed the greatest discrepancy between current and desired degrees of participation, with perceived involvement very low and proportions preferring more input to this area very high.

Table 5.14 shows an analysis of actual and preferred involvement by various subgroups of staff. The table indicates those areas for which there were significant inter-group

differences. As the table illustrates, differences in actual involvement in particular decision areas were not necessarily linked with difference in preferred involvement, and vice versa.

Decision area								**Total of areas**
explanatory variable:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
college	X(X)	X	(X)		(X)		X(X)	3(4)
college size	X		(X)					1(1)
matrix/dept. org.								0(0)
junior/senior staff	X	X	X(X)			X	X	5(1)
dept.-acad./voc.		X(X)			X	(X)		2(2)
type of course taught	X	X	X	X	X		X	6(0)
grad./non-grad.								0(0)
gender					X			1(0)
age group	X	X			X(X)			3(1)
Total of variables	4(1)	5(1)	3(3)	1(0)	4(2)	1(1)	3(1)	20(9)

Table 5.14: Actual and preferred involvement in departmental decision areas, explanatory variables

X = significant differences in *actual* level of involvement.

(X) = significant differences in *preferred* level of involvement.

Where no symbol is shown differences are NS.

Those wanting less involvement are excluded from the calculations as numbers were too small for statistical analysis.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in actual or preferred extent of involvement in any decision-making areas between staff in colleges with matrix organizations and those with departmental structures. Despite the arguments that matrix systems enable a wider degree of staff participation, the results show that at departmental level, at least, staff in matrix colleges did not perceive themselves as having significantly higher levels of participation than staff in other colleges. Nor did staff in departmentally organized colleges report a significantly higher preferred level of involvement than their colleagues working with matrix structures. Again, this would tend to indicate that it was not particular structures which influenced staff perspectives but the way in which they were operated.

There were also significant differences on only two decision areas (course) planning (actual) and teaching methods (preferred) between larger and smaller colleges. Staff in larger colleges showed lower levels of involvement in course planning and higher preferred levels in teaching methods. Contrary to what might be expected it would not seem that the size of the college played a major part in explaining staffs' actual and desired participation in decision-making.

Graduate and non-graduate and male and female staff also showed very little or no difference in either aspect of participation. However, as might be expected, junior and senior staff showed differences in actual involvement on 5 of the 7 decision areas. In all areas except teaching methods, senior staff showed significantly lower proportions having little or no involvement. On teaching methods, a higher percentage of junior staff reported at least some involvement. This is probably because this decision area is most closely connected to the individual staff member's teaching and hence more junior staff,

with more class contact hours than senior staff, have a greater input to decisions which take place at individual or small-group level rather than on a department-wide basis. However, there was no evidence that higher proportions of junior than senior staff wanted more participation, contrary to what might be expected. In fact, teaching methods was the only area for which there were significant differences between the two groups, and here more senior staff wanted increased involvement in decisions: 30.3% as compared with only 17.1% of junior members ($p = < 2.5\%$).

There were also significant differences in actual participation between those teaching various types of course on six of the decision areas. In each case, those teaching GCE courses tended to show a higher proportion than other groups of staff, with at least some involvement in the decision areas (except exams and assessment where GCE staff had marginally lower proportion than other groups). The reasons for this are not clear; it may be that this reflects differences in the nature of the subjects or the staff involved. Again, though, there were no differences in preferred extent of involvement between the various course groups.

Although inter-college differences on most of the factors examined in this study tended to be high, the colleges showed significant differences in actual participation on only three decision areas and in preferred participation on only four items, though inter-college differences on these items was often quite large. There was no clear overall pattern of inter-college views across all these items, i.e. with particular colleges tending to score higher or lower on all items. The striking exception here was College 2 which showed lower proportions than most/all other colleges with little actual involvement and correspondingly lower proportions than other colleges of staff seeking increased participation. This would tend to suggest higher levels of satisfaction with current involvement in decision-making than other colleges, at least at departmental/subunit level.

Decision areas 1, 2 and 7 were of particular interest here as high proportions of staff, over a third, expressed a need for more involvement in these areas (see Table 5.13). There were no significant inter-college differences on item 2 (course content), but there were for items 1 and 7 for both actual and preferred involvement. In course planning decisions, Colleges 10, 11 and 3 showed relatively larger levels and Colleges 2 and 7 comparatively low levels of staff with little or no participation; while Colleges 4, 5 and 10 showed fairly high proportions of staff preferring more involvement and Colleges 2 and 6 fairly few staff wanting more consultation. On financial decisions, College 4 showed rather high proportions and Colleges 1 and 2 rather low proportions of those with little or no involvement. On preferred involvement in financial decisions, high proportions in Colleges 7 and 4 wanted more participation and fairly low proportions in Colleges 1 and 2. There was some tendency for those in colleges reporting low levels of participation to want more, and for those reporting relatively high involvement to be satisfied with their current extent of participation.

Institutional level decision-making

A similar analysis was conducted of teachers' actual and preferred extent of involvement in decision-making at institutional/academic board level. Tables 5.15 and 5.16 show overall results for the sample group. As is to be expected, very few staff reported a great deal of involvement in any decision area, less than 8% of respondents for each item. In comparison over 25% reported a great deal of participation in departmental decisions for all areas except finance. Over 70% of staff reported little or no involvement in all decision areas at institutional level.

		a great deal	some	little/none	N = 100%
(1)	Course planning	7.8	17.6	74.6	398
(2)	Course/content/syllabus	6.0	18.9	75.1	397
(3)	Teaching methods	5.3	10.7	84.0	393
(4)	Exams & assessment	7.7	18.1	74.2	391
(5)	Student pastoral matters	5.6	14.6	79.8	391
(6)	Routine administration	6.6	18.7	74.7	396
(7)	Allocation of financial resources	3.5	9.3	87.2	398

Table 5.15: Staff actual levels of involvement in institutional level decision making

Decision area		Preferred involvement, %ages			
		would prefer more	current level OK	would prefer less	N = 100%
(1)	Course planning	44.6	55.4	-	377
(2)	Course content/syllabus	41.2	58.6	-	376
(3)	Teaching methods	30.8	69.3	-	365
(4)	Exams & assessment	31.1	67.6	1.4	367
(5)	Student pastoral matters	24.7	74.8	0.5	369
(6)	Routine administration	19.7	74.0	6.2	370
(7)	Allocation of financial resources	37.6	62.1	0.3	372

Table 5.16: Staff preferred levels of involvement in institutional level decision-making

With regard to preferred involvement, proportions wanting more at institutional level were rather higher than corresponding proportions desiring more participation in departmental decisions (see Tables 5.16 and 5.13). This may be because academic board policy making was seen as more important, and thus an area in which increased participation was sought to a greater extent than more routine departmental policy making processes. Another reason may be that, as noted above, perceived levels on

departmental decision involvement were much higher. Again, very few or none wanted less involvement, even in routine administrative decision areas, where over a quarter wanted less at departmental level. By contrast with departmental decisions, no decision areas at institutional level stood out as ones in which staff saw particularly low levels of current participation or desired increased involvement to a markedly greater extent than for other areas. In all decision areas, staff in general saw participation as low, and relatively high proportions ranging between one fifth and over 40% would have preferred a greater degree of participation.

Table 5.17 shows subgroups of staff for which there were significant differences in actual and preferred levels of involvement in the various decision areas.

explanatory variable	**Institutional decision area**							**Total of areas**
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
college	X(X)	(X)	(X)					1(3)
college size	X(X)	(X)	(X)					1(3)
matrix/dept. org								0(0)
junior/senior staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7(0)
dept.-acad./voc								0(0)
type of course taught	(X)	(X)			(X)	(X)		0(4)
grad/non-grad.	X	X(X)	(X)	X	(X)	(X)	X(X)	4(5)
gender	X			X				2(0)
age group	(X)		(X)	(X)	(X)	X	X	2(4)
Total of variables	5(4)	2(4)	1(4)	3(1)	1(3)	2(2)	3(1)	17(19)

Table 5.17: Actual and preferred involvement institutional decision areas, explanatory variables

X = significant differences in actual levels of involvement.

(X) = significant differences in *preferred* levels of involvement.

Where no symbol is shown differences are NS.

Those wanting less involvement are excluded from the calculations for all decision areas, as numbers were too small for statistical analysis.

Again, there were no significant differences for any item between staff in colleges with matrix structures and those in other colleges. As with the similar result for department level involvement, this indicates that staff in colleges with matrix organizations did not see themselves as having a greater participation in decision-making; nor did staff in departmentally structured colleges show a greater tendency to want more involvement than those in colleges with matrix structures. Staff in individual colleges and those in larger and smaller institutions showed differences in actual involvement in course planning, and in preferred involvement in course planning, content and teaching methods. As with departmental decision areas, there was not a clear pattern of individual college levels of involvement across all relevant items, though staff in Colleges 4 and 9 tended to show higher proportions of staff wanting more involvement, and Colleges 2 and 10 rather lower proportions wanting a greater extent of participation. These results show some similarities with those for departmental decision areas, with College 2 staff showing relatively high levels of satisfaction with current participation, and College 4 rather lower levels of satisfaction. Interestingly, both colleges have matrix forms of organization. It may be that particular factors associated with decision-making at both departmental and institutional levels were important here – such as institutional culture and ethos and management style.

Staff in larger colleges reported lower levels of actual involvement in course planning, and a greater proportion preferring more involvement in course planning, content and

teaching methods, than staff in smaller institutions. This would tend to suggest that for these decision areas, there was scope for larger colleges to take particular steps to arrange a greater degree of staff participation, or at least consultation, with respect to institutional level decision-making.

As might be expected, senior and junior staff showed significant differences in actual levels of involvement in all decision areas; in all cases senior staff showed much lower proportions (sometimes over 30% lower) having little or no involvement. Interestingly, though, there were no differences in preferred involvement, relatively high proportions of both groups seeking a greater input to institutional decisions, which would suggest that desire for increased participation in college wide policy-making was relatively high for all grades of staff, even among more senior staff who had relatively high levels of perceived involvement.

There were also a number of disparities between graduates and non-graduates and older and younger staff. In all cases, non-graduates showed higher proportions having little or no actual involvement and lower proportions wanting increased participation. This would tend to suggest that graduates, on the whole were more involved in actual decisions and more keen for greater involvement than their non-graduate colleagues, maybe because they were more ambitious and saw involvement in institutional policy-making as a route to promotion and increased influence on college-wide decisions (Bradley and Silverleaf, 1979). Younger staff reported less actual involvement in areas 6 and 7 (administration and finance), and showed higher percentages preferring more involvement on four of the seven decision areas. Those teaching on various types of course also showed disparities in preferred involvement. On the whole those teaching GCE courses tended to show rather higher satisfaction with current levels and those teaching more than one type of course showed rather lower percentages of staff satisfied with current extent of participation, though the reasons for these differences are not clear.

With respect to the issues raised at the beginning of this subsection, there was no clear pattern of association between organization structures and perceived levels of participation in decisions. Despite the claim that matrix structures enable greater decision making involvement for more staff, there were no significant differences in actual or preferred extent of involvement in any decision making areas between staff in colleges with matrix organizations and those with departmental structures. This applied to both departmental level and institutional level decision making. Similarly, as regards individual colleges, there was no clear pattern of association between staff levels of satisfaction with organizational structures discussed in subsection 5.1.3 (a) above, and perceived and preferred levels of involvement in decision making. However there was some tendency for staff in College 2 to be more satisfied with existing levels of decision involvement and those in College 4 to seek greater involvement in a number of decision areas. College 2 also showed quite high levels of staff reporting that their college was meeting tertiary goals with respect to student provision (see Section 5.1.1 above) though their views on organizational issues were rather more mixed (see Section 5.1.2). College 4 staff, however, tended to show rather lower than average levels of satisfaction, often considerably lower, on most aspects of student provision and organizational systems discussed above. This would suggest that the influence of particular factors in College 4, for example organizational culture and management style, may have had a negative impact on staff attitudes towards the college in general.

Looking overall at staff responses on decision involvement, there would seem to be a considerable demand across all the colleges for greater decision participation, both at departmental level and particularly at institutional level. At institutional level, senior as well as junior staff sought greater participation. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, decision involvement is associated with staff ownership of change and development, enhancing teachers' commitment to organizational purposes (Fullan, 1991). The results above suggest that there was considerable scope for senior managers to increase staff

involvement in decisions, thereby promoting greater commitment to organizational goals and structures. Managers however did not regard staff decision involvement as problematic. As with the issue of organizational structures, this would suggest a mismatch between organizational leaders' intentions and perceptions and the meanings and interpretations of organizational members (Greenfield, 1973).

5.2 Question (e) Integration between subunits

Like decision involvement, collaborative ways of working across the organization also tend to foster staff commitment and a sense of organizational cohesion (see Chapter 2.5). The question of cohesion was particularly important for the tertiary colleges as one of their primary purposes, as described by principals, was to foster co-operation and integration between two previously separated areas of work, staff and students, building a shared culture and ethos. Research question (e) was concerned with staff views on the degree of integration and co-operation between subunits within the colleges. Principals and college documents claimed that rather than operating as two separate academic and vocational areas of work, the tertiary colleges were integrated and unified new institutions which had removed pre-existing barriers between the two areas. A high degree of inter-subunit co-ordination and flexibility, it was argued, was important in developing a tertiary ethos for the institution overall, and in meeting students' academic and social needs.

Nonetheless, a number of factors might be seen to militate against this. First (as noted in Chapter 2.2) the operation of FE teachers' salary arrangements at the time of the study provided a strong incentive for individual departments/subunits to build up student numbers and teaching hours for themselves, and hence to compete rather than co-operate with each other. Second, the diversity of work within large and heterogeneous organizations is likely to promote a plurality of competing subcultures and ideologies

centred around the various areas of work, which may inhibit cross college co-operation. Colleges may be characterized by cultural differentiation (Meyerson and Martin, 1987), rather than the cultural integration which principals sought to develop. Third, there was the issue of bringing together two very different groups of staff – ex-FE and ex-schools – within one institution. As Maclure (1991) and King (1976) have argued (see Chapter 2.4), the ideologies and professional identities of the two groups show considerable contrasts, and are based on long-established and deep seated traditions and attitudes. It might be expected, therefore, that including these groups within one organization might raise particular problems in achieving a commonality of approach and a high degree of cross-college co-operation. Comments from staff on the drawbacks of teaching in the colleges, discussed in Section 5.1.2 above, indicated that to some extent 'them and us' attitudes and 'academic' and 'vocational' stereotypes were evident in staff subcultures.

However, all the colleges in the study had been operating for at least five years, so there had been time for the changes involved in tertiary reorganization to become embedded and institutionalized as part of the organization's taken-for-granted routine (see Davies and Morgan, Chapter 2.5). The official rhetoric of the tertiary colleges, as expressed by principals and senior staff, laid considerable emphasis on the integrated and unified nature of the colleges. It might therefore be expected that some degrees of co-operation between subunits and between different subgroups of staff had become established. This might be more evident in colleges with matrix structures since this form of organization separates responsibilities for teaching and for students, and hence, it is argued, is likely to lead to a greater degree of integration between subunits. Three main aspects of integration were examined:

(1) cross-college co-ordination;

(2) co-operation between GCE and vocational areas of work;

(3) extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff.

5.2.1 Cross-college co-ordination

The study sought to examine staff views on the extent of cross-college co-ordination by asking respondents to indicate the extent of their actual and preferred contact with colleagues in other departments/subunits of the college with regard to a number of decision areas and to social interaction among staff. Results are shown in Tables 5.18 and 5.19. Table 5.18 indicates that, on the whole, actual levels of contact with colleagues in other subunits were rather low; with the exception of social interaction, over 45% of respondents had little or no contact on any of the task areas investigated. This rose to nearly three quarters of respondents on teaching methods. Of course, it might be argued with respect to teaching methods in particular that this is a subject-specific concern and therefore one would not expect a high degree of liaison between subunits about it.

However, since many tertiary college students were taking subjects across a number of departments or course programmes serviced by staff from a number of subunits then it may be argued that there may have been a case for a greater degree of co-ordination than is evidenced by the results here. Students may be confused by the use of different teaching methods in different elements of their courses, and their educational and social development may have been better served by a rather higher degree of sub-unit co-ordination than is suggested by these results.

	Decision area	actual level of contact, %age			
		a great deal	some	little/none	N=100%
(1)	Course planning/content	9.1	40.4	50.4	408
(2)	Teaching	7.2	39.7	53.1	405
(3)	Teaching methods	4.2	22.4	73.4	402
(4)	Exams and assessment	9.5	39.1	51.4	401
(5)	Student pastoral matters	13.2	41.4	45.4	401
(6)	Routine administration	9.0	41.6	49.4	401
(7)	Social interaction	13.1	57.1	29.8	406

Table 5.18: Extent of contact with staff in other departments/subunits

	Decision area	preferred level of contact, %age			
		would prefer more	current level OK	would prefer less	N=100%
(1)	Course planning/content	34.2	65.2	0.6	380
(2)	Teaching	35.8	73.6	0.6	381
(3)	Teaching methods	30.3	68.9	0.9	380
(4)	Exams and assessment	20.7	77.3	2.0	377
(5)	Student pastoral matters	27.7	71.2	1.1	380
(6)	Routine administration	13.8	80.6	5.6	376
(7)	Social interaction	29.7	69.2	1.1	380

Table 5.19: Preferred extent of contact with staff in other departments/subunits

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between matrix and departmentally organized colleges on any of the seven items, suggesting that colleges with a matrix structure did not enjoy any particular advantages with respect to inter-unit co-ordination. Nor were there differences between larger and smaller colleges on any of the six task

areas, despite the commonly accepted view that larger institutions are likely to experience particular difficulties in organizing co-operation between subunits (Bradley and Silverleaf, 1979). Staff in larger colleges, however, reported a lower degree of social contact with colleagues in other subunits than those in smaller colleges; 37.5% and 24.8%, respectively, reporting little or no social contact ($p = < 2.5\%$). As might be expected, senior and junior staff showed significant differences on a number of items: course planning, teaching methods, exams and assessment, and routine administration. In each case considerably larger proportions of senior staff than junior ones reported at least some contact.

Staff teaching on different types of course showed significant differences with respect to course planning, exams and assessment and student pastoral matters. On the first two of these items, staff teaching GCE only showed the highest proportion of those have little contact with other subunits, and those teaching 'mixed' courses the lowest proportions. This seems understandable since courses comprising only GCE subjects may have been relatively self contained, whereas mixed courses, involving disparate course elements and usually more than one external examining body, were likely to need a greater degree of inter-unit liaison and planning. With regard to student pastoral matters, staff teaching only TEC/C & G courses showed the highest proportion of staff with little/no contact with colleagues in other units, and those teaching GCE only and BEC only were more likely to report at least some contact. This may be because in most cases course tutors for TEC/C & G were responsible for students' overall welfare, whereas on GCE courses the students' personal tutor was teaching only part of his/her courses and in some cases did not teach the student at all. Hence a greater degree of contact with colleagues in other units was necessary. A similar difference was reflected in results for staff teaching in vocational and academic/general departments. There were no differences here on any item except student pastoral matters, where considerably higher proportions of staff in

vocationally oriented areas of the college than those in academic/general areas reported little or no contact with colleagues in other units.

As regards respondents' preferred extent of contact with other colleagues (see Table 5.19), over two thirds of staff expressed satisfaction on all items. Very few wanted less contact. However, for all items except routine administration between a fifth and a third of staff would have preferred more contact. Items showing the highest proportions of staff wanting more contact were: course planning, teaching methods and social interaction. Staff views thus suggest considerable support for more contact with other areas, indicating that there may have been scope for promoting greater subunit co-ordination by the colleges.

There were no significant differences in preferred extent of contact between matrix and departmentally organized colleges, or larger and smaller ones, or junior and senior staff and those teaching in academic/general and vocational departments. Those teaching on various types of course showed significant differences only on student pastoral matters. Those teaching on A level only and mixed courses showed higher proportions (than those teaching on other courses) who would have preferred a greater degree of contact, perhaps reflecting the need for more co-ordination on pastoral matters for students on these types of course, as compared with those following a course 'package', such as BTEC, with a course tutor in overall charge of their progress and welfare. There were also age group differences on the first five items in Table 5.19. In each case, higher proportions of younger staff wanted more contact, while older staff were on the whole satisfied with the current extent of liaison.

Overall, these results tend to suggest rather low perceived levels of inter-unit co-ordination, despite the integrationist claims of senior managers. Although there were differences between various subgroups of staff, the type of organization structure and

college size were not linked with differences in staff views on actual or preferred contact, except as regards social contact, which was more likely to be reported as limited in larger colleges. A considerable minority of staff would have welcomed more contact. As with the findings on the related issue of decision-involvement (Chapter 5.1.3 (b) above), the results suggest a mismatch between the perspectives of principals and those of staff on the issue of organizational co-operation and cohesion. Levels of staff support for greater inter-unit contact indicate that there were opportunities for promoting greater cross-college co-ordination that might have been more fully developed.

5.2.2 Co-operation between GCE and vocational areas of work

In the exploration of staff views on the extent of integration in the colleges, they were also asked: What degree of co-operation is there between subunits of the college concerned with GCE work and those concerned with vocational courses?

In the light of the differences in subcultures between staff from different institutional and subject backgrounds discussed in Chapter 2.4, the study sought to investigate staff views on the extent to which such differences had been transcended in tertiary colleges which had been operating for a number of years. Some degree of shared integration between these subgroups would seem to be essential in order to meet the expressed goals of the colleges.

It was an objective of the colleges to promote co-operation between GCE and vocational areas of work so that students could choose a course programme to suit their individual needs, mixing elements from the two areas as appropriate. However, the results did not show evidence of a high perceived degree of co-operation (see Table 5.20). Only about 6% reported a great deal of co-operation, and a further third of respondents reported a fair amount; nearly 60% indicated not very much or none at all. Of course, as well as

factors relating to staff sub-cultures, there were a number of more practical constraints to co-operation between the two areas, principally staff time and geographical difficulties, particularly where, as in many cases, some departments/subunits were located away from the main site. In general, these figures would seem to indicate that the two areas of work were operating as rather separate entities within the colleges.

	%	N=
A great deal	6.3	25
A fair amount	34.3	135
Not very much	52.8	208
None at all	6.6	26
Total	100	394

Table 5.20: Extent of co-operation between GCE and vocational subunits

There were no significant differences here between junior and senior staff, graduates and non-graduates, male and female respondents or older and younger age groups. There were also no differences between colleges with matrix and departmental forms of organization, despite the arguments that matrix structures facilitate co-operation between subunits. However, as Table 5.21 shows, size was an important variable here: staff in smaller colleges were significantly more likely than those in larger colleges to report at least a fair amount of co-operation between the two areas (nearly 50% and 28% respectively).

Extent of GCE/vocational co-operation, percentages

College size	a great deal/a fair amount	not very much/none at all	N=
larger	28.0	72.0	161
smaller	49.4	50.6	233
Total	40.6	59.4	394

chi square signif. %age, p=<0.01

Table 5.21: Extent of co-operation between GCE and vocational areas by college size

Extent of GCE/vocational co-operation, percentages

College no.		a great deal/a fair amount	not very much/none at all	N=
(1)		55.6	44.4	27
(2)	matrix org. structures	45.5	54.5	22
(3)		77.8	22.2	27
(4)		21.9	78.1	64
(5)	larger colleges	28.6	71.4	49
(6)		35.4	64.6	48
(7)		50.0	50.5	30
(8)	dept. org. structures	36.4	63.6	33
(9)		60.7	39.3	28
(10)		41.7	58.3	36
(11)		33.3	66.7	30
Total		40.6	59.4	394

chi square signif. %age, p=<0.01

Table 5.22: Extent of co-operation between GCE and vocational areas, by college

Analysis of results by individual college (see Table 5.22) tended to confirm the importance of college size as an influencing factor here - the three larger colleges were all among the four colleges with the lowest reported extent of GCE-vocational co-

operation. However, with the exception of College 4 (one of the larger colleges) those with matrix organizations showed a relatively high extent of co-operation, particularly College 3, the smallest college in the sample group which also had a fairly low proportion of vocational work. Though no significant difference was found between matrix and departmentally organized colleges, it may be that College 4 distorted the results here (as with some of the findings reported earlier). It may therefore be suggested that while matrix structures may operate relatively effectively in smaller colleges to encourage liaison between GCE and vocational areas of work, department structures may be equally effective in some smaller colleges. Larger colleges, with either form of organization were less likely to have a great degree of liaison between the two areas. College 9 is also of interest here. It was the only institution in the sample which was not established around the basis of a pre-existing FE college, and showed a relatively high extent of reported co-operation. It may be that it was easier to develop subunit co-operation in a college where all elements in the structure were established at the same time, obviating the need to graft new areas of work into a college with established structures and ways of working — pre-existing practices and attitudes may be a barrier to subunit integration, even in colleges that have been established for a number of years. As Fullan (1991) suggests, the inertia of past meanings is a major impediment to change.

Table 5.23 shows the differences between those teaching various types of course in reported extent of co-operation between GCE and vocational areas of the college. Staff teaching on BEC and secretarial courses showed the highest levels of reported co-operation and those working on TEC/C & G courses the lowest. This may be because those involved in the latter area of provision operated in a fairly self-contained way with little need for liaison with staff teaching GCE options. BEC and secretarial teachers on the other hand, were likely to have at least some students who were also taking one or more GCE subjects and hence were likely to be more aware of, or involved in, some degree of co-operation between these two areas of work.

	Extent of GCE/vocational co-operation, percentages		
Type of course taught	**a great deal/a fair amount**	**not very much/none at all**	**N=**
GCE only	47.0	53.0	100
BEC/secret. only	53.7	46.3	41
TEC/C & G only	27.8	72.2	97
More than one type of course	41.0	59.0	117
Total	40.6	59.4	355
chi square signif. %age, p= < 2.5			

Table 5.23: Extent of co-operation between GCE and vocational areas, by type of course taught

Overall, these results reinforce the findings on limited co-ordination between subunits discussed in Section 5.2.1 above, and those comments on the drawbacks of the colleges which suggested a division between academic and vocational areas of work (see Table 5.6,, items 3 and 4). There were considerable variations between colleges, with College 3 staff reporting particularly high levels of co-operation, and College 4 staff rather low levels. In general, it would seem that many staff did not share the principals' views of the colleges as relatively cohesive organizations which had transcended the long-established barriers between the two areas of work and staff.

5.2.3 Integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff

Staff were also asked: What degree of integration and shared perspective is there between ex-school and ex-FE staff? As Table 5.24 shows, rather higher proportions of staff reported at least a fair amount of integration between these groups, in comparison with figures for GCE-vocational co-operation (51.6% and 40.6% respectively).

	%	N=
A great deal	15.9	62
A fair amount	35.7	139
Not very much	42.9	171
None at all	4.4	17
Total	100	389

Table 5.24: Extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff

However, this figure of only just over half of staff indicates that perceived differences between the two groups persisted even after they had co-existed within one institution for a number of years. King (1976) suggests that for students the tertiary college 'represents something of a social hybrid of the community [the characteristic ideology of the school 6th form] and the association' (characteristic of the FE college) (p. 187). The above results suggest that for staff the process of hybridization between the two differing ideologies, attitudes and ways of working may have been a more lengthy one.

Various subgroups of staff showed a similar pattern of responses as for the issue of academic/vocational integration discussed above. Thus there were again no significant differences between junior and senior staff, graduates and others, male and female and older and younger staff. Subgroups for which there were differences are shown in Tables 5.25-5.28. Staff in smaller colleges were again more likely to agree that there was at least a fair amount of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff (see Table 5.25). By contrast with results for the question of academic/vocational integration, there were significant differences between departmentally-organized institutions and those with matrix structures (see Table 5.26). Staff in colleges with the latter type of organization were less likely to agree that there was at least a fair amount of integration between schools and FE staff. This may be because the existence of a relatively large number of teaching teams each dealing with a fairly specific discipline/area of knowledge

reinforced and perpetuate staff awareness of the various subject cultures (Hewton, 1980) and the differences between them. Departmental structures, on the other hand, group staff into larger and more heterogeneous subunits and hence are likely to promote a greater degree of integration of staff with backgrounds in different types of institution.

	Extent of integration, ex-school/ex-FE staff, percentages		
College size	**a great deal/a fair amount**	**not very much/ none at all**	**N=**
smaller	57.0	43.0	237
larger	43.4	56.6	152
Total	51.7	48.3	389

chi square signif. %age, p=<2.5

Table 5.25: Staff views on extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff, by college size

	Extent of integration, ex-school/ex-FE staff, percentages		
College org. structure	**a great deal/a fair amount**	**not very much/ none at all**	**N=**
matrix	44.0	56.0	141
dept.	56.0	44.0	248
Total	51.7	48.3	389

chi square signif. %age, p=<5.0

Table 5.26: Staff views on extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff, by college organization structure

College no.		Extent of integration of ex-school and ex-FE staff, percentages: a great deal/fair amount	not very much/ not at all	N = 100%
(1)	matrix org.	57.1	42.9	28
(2)		37.5	62.5	24
(3)		88.5	11.5	26
(4)	larger colleges	22.2	77.8	63
(5)		62.2	37.8	45
(6)		54.5	45.5	44
(7)	dept. org.	58.1	41.9	31
(8)		19.4	80.6	31
(9)		72.4	27.6	29
(10)		61.1	38.9	36
(11)		62.5	37.5	32
Total		51.7	48.3	389

chi square signif. %age, p. = <0.01

Table 5.27: Staff views on extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff, by college

Type of course taught	Extent of integration of ex-school and ex-FE staff, %ages a great deal/a fair amount	not very much/none at all	N = 100%
GCE only	61.8	38.2	102
BEC/secret. only	65.8	24.3	38
TEC/C & G only	43.4	56.6	99
More than one type of course	46.5	53.5	114
Total	52.1	47.9	353
chi square signif. %age, p=< 2.5			

Table 5.28: Staff views on extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff, by type of course taught

However, examination of results for individual colleges (see Table 5.27) indicates that these broad findings need to be interpreted with some caution. Again, College 4 showed results considerably at variance with those for the other 2 larger colleges (nos. 5 and 6), both of which had percentages of staff above the overall average reporting at least a fair amount of integration between school and FE staff. Thus College 4 distorted the overall results for larger colleges here. Similar caveats apply to the findings for colleges with different types of organization structure. Colleges 3 and 4, both with matrix systems, showed a very wide disparity. College 3 was a very small and tightly knit institution located in a small rural market town. It had less than 40 full-time staff who all used one common room and hence interacted to a much greater degree than would be possible for staff occupying a number of common rooms. The close informal, as well as formal, links among staff in a small institution are important in developing integration between various discipline areas which, in larger organizations may form separate and self-contained entities (see e.g. Bush, 1995). College 4 was a much larger and more heterogeneous organization. It had been reorganized twice in the 10 years prior to the

study, once as a sixth form college, and later as rolls fell it was amalgamated with a nearby FE institution to form a tertiary college. It may be that the impact of these reorganizations had a continuing impact on staff attitudes and cultures, contributing to their perceptions of limited integration between staff subgroups.

It is also interesting to note from Table 5.27 that College 8, which operated on relatively separate sites has a very low degree of perceived integration between these two groups of staff. Conversely, in College 9, which developed as a tertiary institution from the beginning, and hence did not bring together staff who had previously been working in local schools and an FE college, staff showed a high percentage agreeing that there was at least a fair amount of integration between the two groups.

The differences in perceived extent of integration between staff teaching on various types of course (see Table 5.28) are rather difficult to interpret. One might expect that those teaching tradition FE courses – TEC/C & G – might perceive a relatively low degree of integration as compared with other groups. However, it is not clear why those teaching a range of courses should also report a relatively low extent of integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff. It may be that, because they crossed the boundaries between different course-related groups of staff in teaching across a range of courses, they were more aware of subcultural differences and lack of integration between subgroups (Paechter, 1995).

Staff perspectives indicate continuing 'them and us' attitudes among subgroups of teachers. As noted in the discussion of college drawbacks (Section 5.1.2), there was evidence that 'academic' and vocational and ex-school and ex-FE staff held somewhat stereotyped views of each other. Similar comments were made to the researcher in talking informally to teachers in college staffrooms. These comments were usually expressed in a light-hearted manner and indeed were often presented as jokes. Like

jokes which compare and contrast ethnic and regional groups, they encapsulate deeply held attitudes and prejudices about the characteristics of groups they describe.

Overall, staff views on the issue of cross-college integration would suggest a considerable degree of separation between areas of work and groups of staff, even though the colleges had been established for some time. As noted in Chapter 2.4, the division between academic and vocational areas of work is deeply entrenched in the British education system (Maclure, 1991; King, 1976). Also, large and diverse organizations such as colleges are likely to be characterized by cultural diversity, Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 2. Given these factors it may be unrealistic to expect restructuring to bring about a shared culture and ethos. Building a collaborative culture requires changing attitudes and values which is a long term and evolutionary process, and may be particularly difficult in large organizations where members' primary allegiances are often attached to subunits rather than to the organization as a whole (see Chapter 2, Sections 2.4 and 2.5).

5.3 Question (f) Pastoral care arrangements

As discussed in Chapter 4, the question of the adequacy of pastoral care was an important one for the colleges. Critics of tertiary colleges pointed out that the lack of a continuing relationship between staff and students, as provided in an all through 11/12 – 18 school, would create considerable problems for students (see Chapter 1). It was argued that an institution which students attend for only one or two years would not be able to provide adequate pastoral care and support for students. On the other hand, college principals suggested that a more adult environment than schools can provide is appropriate for most young people at 16+. They emphasized that the colleges had paid particular attention to developing effective systems of pastoral care, which balanced care

and control, echoing Hargreaves' (1995) discussion of the balance between social control and social cohesion cultural domains in educational organizations (see Chapter 2.4).

The research therefore examined staff views on various aspects of the pastoral provision of their colleges. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their college provided adequate guidance to students on each of the following:

(a) transition to college/induction;

(b) personal matters;

(c) work and progress in college;

(d) future career/education after leaving college.

A four point response scale was included, ranging from 'very adequate' to 'not at all adequate'. Results for the overall sample are shown in Table 5.29.

As the data indicate, the vast majority of staff, over 80% for all items, rising to over 95% for 'work and progress', viewed their own college's guidance provision as at least fairly adequate. These results would seem to suggest that if one takes the perspectives of college staff as an indicator, the fears about potential problems in tertiary colleges' pastoral provision would seem to have been groundless. On all items except work and progress about a third of staff indicated that provision was very adequate, with a further 50% regarding it as fairly adequate, indicating that quite a large proportion of staff may have felt that there was some room for improvement. On work and progress, though, nearly 50% reported provision as very adequate, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with this aspect of student guidance. However, student views were considerably at

variance from those of staff on this issue. Students expressed a considerable demand for more guidance provision. There would seem to be a substantial mismatch between what Bradshaw (1972) describes as 'normative needs' (i.e. staff interpretations of student needs) and 'felt needs' (i.e. students' perceptions of their own needs). This issue is discussed in Chapter 6.

	Extent to which college provides adequate guidance: percentages				
	very adequate	**fairly adequate**	**not very adequate**	**not at all adequate**	**N=100 %**
college transition/induction	32.4	52.5	12.7	2.5	408
personal matters	32.3	57.1	9.4	1.0	405
work and progress	48.0	47.1	4.9	0.0	408
future career/ed.	37.6	51.6	9.8	1.0	407

Table 5.29: Staff views on adequacy of various aspects of student guidance

The following subgroups of staff examined in the survey showed no significant differences on any of the four guidance items: junior and senior staff, those teaching in academic and vocational areas of the college, graduates and non-graduates, males and females, older and younger staff. Again, those teaching in colleges with matrix and departmental forms of organization also showed no significant differences. This would suggest that neither form of organization had any particular strengths or weaknesses with respect to guidance provision for students.

There were, however, differences between individual colleges and larger and smaller institutions as shown in Tables 5.30 and 5.31. As Table 5.30 shows, College 4 tended to show rather lower levels of staff satisfaction with guidance provision for students,

though this may be associated with the size of the college - larger institutions showed a tendency for slightly lower levels of reported adequacy of guidance (Table 5.31), though the differences were not large and were statistically significant for only two items. Colleges 7 and 11 also showed rather low levels of staff satisfaction with student guidance on transfer to college, though not on the other three items. This may be linked to staff discontent with the organization of the transfer process and the induction of students into the college. Interviewees at both colleges (and College 4) spoke of the need for more systematic arrangements for the induction of new students.

Staff reporting guidance provision as very/fairly adequate, percentages

College no.	**a) transition**	**b) personal matters**	**c) work and progress**	**d) future career/ed**
1	86.7	100	96.7	93.3
2	100	96.0	100	96.0
3	96.4	100	100	96.4
4	68.3	82.3	84.1	82.5
5	87.8	81.3	95.9	83.7
6	92.0	98.0	94.0	88.0
7	71.0	96.8	100	96.8
8	90.9	78.1	100	84.4
9	93.3	86.7	93.3	86.7
10	97.3	94.6	100	100
11	62.5	81.3	93.8	84.4
Total (and N in brackets):	84.8 (408)	89.6 (405)	95.1 (408)	89.2 (407)
chi square signif. %age, p=<	0.01	0.5	1.0	NS

Table 5.30: Staff views on adequacy of various aspects of guidance provision, by college.

However, there was no clear pattern of association between staff reported adequacy of transition/induction and student preferences for more help at this stage in individual colleges. Although College 4 showed a relatively high proportion of students preferring more help on transition to college, College 7 and 11 did not, while in College 2, where all respondents reported that the guidance of new students was at least fairly adequate, 48.6% of students would have preferred more help on entry to college. This tends to reinforce the point raised above, that staff views on the adequacy of the colleges' *provision may not be an accurate guide to students' perceived needs.*

	Staff reporting guidance provision as very/fairly adequate, %ages			
College size	**a) transition**	**b) personal matters**	**c) work and progress**	**d) future career/ed.**
smaller	87.0	91.4	98.0	92.2
larger	81.5	86.9	90.7	84.6
Total (and N in brackets)	84.8 (408)	89.6 (405)	95.1 (408)	89.2 (407)
chi square signif. %age, p =<	NS	NS	0.5	2.5

Table 5.31: Staff views on adequacy of various aspects of guidance provision, by college size

Staff views on pastoral provision in general showed relatively high levels of satisfaction with this area of provision, echoing principals' views that pastoral care in the colleges was dealt with effectively, with an appropriate balance between maintaining a careful overview of students' progress and allowing them a measure of responsibility for their own development. Student perspectives, discussed in the next chapter, however, were somewhat at variance with this view, showing evidence for a demand for higher levels of guidance provision.

5.4 Question (g): Organization structures and college size

Research question (g) was concerned with the extent to which particular forms of organization structure (i.e. matrix and departmental systems) and college size were linked with differences in staff perspectives on questions (d) to (f) discussed above. The study sought to explore whether there was an association between structure and size and staff levels of satisfaction with their colleges and views on the extent to which the colleges were achieving their goals.

As regards structure, it might be expected that staff views would reflect the claimed advantages and disadvantages of matrix and departmental systems discussed in Chapter 2.4. Thus staff in matrix-organized colleges might perceive the structure as promoting wider opportunities to participate in decision-making and the flexibility, innovativeness and cross-organizational integration noted by Kanter (1983) (see Chapter 2.4), while having the disadvantages of complexity and lack of clear lines of responsibility (Ferguson, 1980). Staff in departmentally-organized colleges on the other hand might perceive the structure as providing clear lines of responsibility but little co-operation between subunits.

However there were no significant differences in staff views between matrix and department systems on any of the areas of organization and provision explored in the study. The only exception here was the question of co-operation between ex-school and ex-FE staff, where, contrary to expectations, staff in matrix-structured colleges were less likely to perceive a high degree of co-ordination between the two groups. On the basis of staff views, neither form of organization was more effective in pursuing the tertiary objectives sought by principals. These results tend to cast doubt on rational system assumptions about the role of structures as vehicles for the achievement of organizational

purposes. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, cultural factors may be equally important in bringing about organizational change. While structures may influence attitudes, they may have a less important role than rational system approaches suggest (Scott, 1987).

Nonetheless it is important to consider these findings about organizational structures in the context of the results for individual colleges, which showed very wide disparities. In particular, College 3 tended to show rather high levels of staff satisfaction on most items, and College 4 rather low levels. College 4 may have somewhat distorted the results for matrix-structured colleges. It would seem that factors relating to the culture and development of individual colleges, Clark's (1983) 'organizational saga', influenced levels of staff satisfaction with their colleges. Each organization's culture is unique, moulded by the shared history and experiences of its members. Although the historical development of individual colleges was beyond the scope of the study, some possible reasons for the wide inter-college differences in staff perspectives are suggested in Chapter 8.

College size seemed to be more closely linked than type of organization structure to differences in staff views. In three of the areas explored in the staff survey — actual and preferred decision involvement, and pastoral provision — there were minor or insignificant differences between larger and smaller colleges. However in all other areas examined there were significant differences. In each case, staff in larger colleges were likely to have less positive views. It may be that it was easier to develop the tertiary colleges' objectives and achieve a greater degree of staff integration in smaller less diverse organizations.

5.5 Summary

The findings of the survey of staff views are summarized with reference to a number of the broad themes identified in Chapter 2.8: organizational perspectives, goals, mission, structure and culture, and organizational change. As discussed in Chapter 2, Sections 2.2 and 2.5, formal and rational system perspectives propose that organizations are directed towards the collective pursuit of specified goals; that structures are designed to facilitate the pursuit of these goals; and that organizational innovation is a relatively systematic and logical process of planning, implementing, and institutionalizing agreed purposes.

Staff views did conform with these premises to some extent. Staff perspectives indicated that they felt their colleges were achieving, at least to some extent, the colleges' goals for students, in providing individual course programmes, some degree of social integration among students, and appropriate pastoral provision. Some staff echoed principals' views of the distinctiveness of the colleges, in pointing to their role in furthering comprehensive education for the whole 16 - 19 age group, breaking down barriers between academic and vocational areas of work, and providing parity of esteem for all students. Staff also perceived some degree of integration between college subunits and subgroups of staff.

However, rational system and formal approaches have a number of inadequacies as a framework for interpreting staff perspectives. In many respects, staff views did not conform to the ordered logic assumed by these approaches. Staff views showed limited agreement with the official college objectives set out by principals. Analysis of staff perspectives on the goals that were pursued by the colleges and the goals that ought to be important did not suggest strong staff support for the official purposes of the colleges as described by senior managers and college documents. The absence of a shared mission suggested by Peeke (1994) (Chapter 2.3) was evident among respondents. Principals

acknowledged an 'implementation gap' between ideals and reality in the pursuit of college goals, with those goals related to the extended version of comprehensiveness being desirable but less actively pursued than those relating to the more limited view of comprehensive education. Staff perspectives, however, suggested rather limited agreement about the desirability of the comprehensive goals espoused by principals.

There was also an implementation gap between the official view, the intentions and expectations of organizational leaders, and the perceptions of members, in relation to the questions of *distinctiveness*, *integration* and *structure*. Thus principals described the *distinctive* ethos of the colleges in fairly clear cut terms, and argued that they had achieved to some extent a shared tertiary ethos which brought together previously separated areas of work, staff and students. Staff views on the colleges' distinctiveness were more mixed. Although they saw the colleges as having some distinctive features in their provision for students, staff views on the benefits and drawbacks of their colleges did not reflect the relatively clear view of a tertiary ethos portrayed by principals. Thus, for example, many of the features that staff identified as benefits – e.g. a wide range of students, staff and teaching – were not specific to tertiary colleges, but were shared, at least to some degree, with other types of post-16 institution. The majority of staff who joined their colleges after reorganization reported that the college's *tertiary* nature was not a major influence on their decision to work at the college. Again, this would suggest the absence of a clear view of the colleges' distinctiveness. Thus, in general, it was not evident, from the perspectives of staff, that the colleges had succeeded in establishing a clearly defined and understood tertiary ethos.

With respect to the question of *integration* between subunits, the official view portrayed the colleges as relatively cohesive organizations which at least to some degree transcended barriers between academic and vocational and school and FE components.

However, staff views on the limited degree of integration between areas of the college and groups of staff was somewhat at odds with the official perspective.

The area of *structure* showed a particularly marked mismatch between the official view and members' perspectives. The principals described organization structures as having been carefully designed 'from first principles' to meet tertiary purposes. Their perspectives were broadly in line with a rational system view of structures as vehicles for achieving organizational purposes. As discussed in Section 5.4 above, one might expect staff views on structure to reflect those of principals on the benefits and drawbacks of matrix and department systems. However the claimed merits of both systems were not borne out in the perspectives of staff. Teachers tended to see organizational structures in negative terms, as sources of problems, rather than as facilitators of organizational purposes.

These factors, and the very wide inter-college disparities in staff views, would suggest the need to draw on alternative perspectives which highlight the individual meanings, subgroup interests, and ambiguities of large-scale change that are neglected by rational-system and formal approaches. As discussed in Chapter 2.4, colleges are complex social organizations, *'held together by a symbolic webbing, rather than formal system[s] driven by goals ... .'* (Deal, 1990, p. 7). Notwithstanding rational assumptions that cultural change will follow structural change, staff attitudes towards their colleges provide limited evidence of the cultural integration portrayed by the official view. Instead, staff perspectives suggested that there was considerable cultural differentiation in the colleges, with a lack of co-operation between subunits and subgroups of staff. They noted divisions between academic and vocational, and ex-school and ex-FE, groups of staff. There was evidence to support a political analysis of the change process, in suggestions of competition for resources between GCE and vocational areas and perceptions that some sectional interests – particularly academic areas of work – had benefited more than

others from tertiary reorganization. This suggests the possibility of 'balkanised subcultures' (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992) where teachers' interests and loyalties are attached to their own particular working groups rather than the college as a whole. There was also evidence of subjective meanings and interpretations of tertiary reorganization, the 'multiple realities' (Greenfield, 1973) of individual staff. A number of staff comments indicated that they interpreted the 'tertiary' college in terms of its impact on their own working conditions and career patterns, in relation to their prior organizational contexts. There was also evidence of 'loose-coupling' (Weick, 1976) between institutional purposes and individual activities. Some staff, particularly those teaching in vocational areas and away from the main college site, indicated that tertiary reorganization had very little influence on their work (and, presumably, also their attitudes), an example of 'innovation without change' (Rudduck, 1986).

As discussed in Chapter 2.5, collaborative ways of working, across the organization are important in building a shared culture and staff commitment to organizational purposes. Staff preferences for a greater degree of decision involvement, particularly at institutional level, and for more inter-unit co-operation, suggest that there was scope for developing more cross-college collaboration, and thereby promoting a greater sense of organizational cohesion. Staff meanings and interpretations of this issue differed from those of principals, who did not perceive fostering greater collaboration as a particular issue. At the time of the study, much of the literature, and practice in educational organizations, focused on structural rather than cultural factors in bringing about change (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994). Ainscow *et al.* (1994) suggest that culture 'is the vital, yet neglected, dimension' in the innovation process (p. 9). In the case of the tertiary colleges, the founder principals gave considerable attention to developing an appropriate organizational structure, but cultural issues may have received less emphasis. While it was acknowledged that tertiary reorganization would have a disruptive effect on staff, (see Baker (1988) and Ballard (1980), discussed in Chapter 2.6 above), this was seen as a

relatively short term issue, linked with the transition process of establishing the new colleges. It was assumed that staff would settle down fairly quickly and adopt attitudes and ways of working in the changed environment of the tertiary college. However, as discussed in Chapter 2.5, bringing about changes in attitudes and organizational cultures is a long term process, involving alternations in the meanings and values of organizational members: cultural transformation *'involves a collective renegotiation of historically anchored myths, metaphors and meanings'* (Deal, 1990, p. 9).

Looking at staff perspectives in general, it would seem that there was substantial ambivalence about the overall goals set out by the college principals. There was considerable evidence of a mismatch between ideals and reality in organizational purposes, and between the views of organizational leaders and members, as regards the implementation of college goals. There was also evidence of subunit and subgroup divisions, rather than the integrationist culture sought by principals. This would suggest that the institutionalization stage of change (Davies and Morgan, 1983), where innovation has become embedded in the attitudes, practices and routines of organizational members, had not yet been reached. In terms of Cuban's (1990) analysis (in Chapter 2.5 above), 'first order' change had been achieved by tertiary reorganization, but for many staff 'second order' change had not taken place.

Chapter 6 The perspectives of full-time students

6.1 Introduction

Chapters 6 and 7 examine full- and part-time student views on their colleges, their levels of satisfaction with their programmes of study and general ethos and the atmosphere of the tertiary colleges. Since the colleges had been established with the explicit purpose of meeting the educational and social needs of the 16-19 age group, the attitudes of these clients to their colleges would provide an important measure of how far these intentions were being achieved in practice.

A number of the broad themes discussed in Chapter 2.8 were relevant in considering student views. First, there were issues relating to student attitudes towards the educational organizations in which they are based. Earlier studies by King (1976) and Dean *et al.* (1979) found that students in colleges in general tended to express rather more positive views than those in schools. The study reported here sought to assess how far students in *tertiary* colleges showed high levels of satisfaction, comparing the findings with results from these other studies where appropriate.

It was also important to explore whether students saw their colleges to be meeting their 'felt' needs (Bradshaw, 1972, in Chapter 2.8 above); i e how far did the colleges' provision for the normative needs of 16-19 year olds match with what students themselves perceived as their own educational and social requirements. Studies of student attitudes discussed in Chapter 2.7 indicate that 16-19 year olds wish to be treated as adults, without undue restrictions and regulations. On the other hand, as noted in Chapter 4.3, there is a need for educational organizations to provide a clear framework of expectations for students, and to keep an overview of their work and progress. As Macfarlane (1993) points out, there is a tension in organizations serving the 16-19 age group between treating young people as *pupils* or as *students*. The study therefore

sought to examine how far, in the eyes of the student, the delicate balance between freedom and control was being achieved.

Other themes identified in Chapter 2.8 of relevance to the student survey were those concerned with perspectives on organizations and organizational change. Rational system and formal models of organization assume a clear link between planned goals and their implementation, and that organizational members broadly share the official view of the organization and its goals, set out by leaders (Scott, 1987). These assumptions imply that students can be expected to perceive their colleges in terms broadly in line with the viewpoint of the principals, and to report the official goals of the tertiary colleges - e. g. those relating to mixed economy courses and social integration - as enacted in practice.

However, as discussed in Chapter 2.8, rational system and formal models may not provide an appropriate framework for interpreting organizational members' views (Theodossin, 1983), since they do not take into account the individual meanings and interpretations of those involved, the 'competing realities' of organizational life (Greenfield, 1973). Analysis of principals' and staff views in Chapters 4 and 5 suggested various limitations in rational system perspectives on organizational goals. The principals' descriptions of tertiary purposes and the extent to which they were enacted indicated evidence of a mismatch between ideals and what was feasible in practice, even in the official version. Similarly, the analysis of staff views suggested various problems in applying rational system and formal perspectives.

Thus in considering student perspectives a number of issues arising from the preceding discussion need to be borne in mind: the goals espoused by senior managers, and the means for achieving them, are not necessarily shared by organizational members - different individuals and groups within the institution may attribute very different meanings to organizational policies and practices (see Fullan, 1991). Attitudinal factors and practical constraints may also inhibit the achievement of organizational goals. In

addition, for groups of institutions sharing similar goals, there may be very wide disparities in the extent to which organizational members perceive that these goals are being met - factors to do with the way in which individual institutions pursue these goals may be important in interpreting members' attitudes.

A related issue raised in Chapter 2.8 is concerned with organizational culture and ethos. Principals portrayed the colleges as having an integrationist culture (Meyerson and Martin, 1987). Staff views on the distinctive ethos of the colleges were rather more mixed, and there was evidence of differentiated teacher subcultures rather than a cohesive corporate culture. It was therefore important to examine student perspectives on the atmosphere and ethos of their colleges, to assess how far, from the students' point of view, the colleges were able to provide an appropriate balance between social control and social cohesion, the two domains of organizational culture identified by Hargreaves (1995, see Chapter 2.4 above). If students shared the principals' perspective of the distinctive ethos of the colleges, oriented towards the needs of the 16-19 age group, one would expect them to express broadly positive views about the community atmosphere of the colleges. On the other hand there is evidence to suggest that part-time students, at least, may not relate to and share the ethos of their colleges, identifying instead with the norms and values of the workplace (Gleeson and Mardle, 1980).

Student views were explored within the framework of research questions (d) to (g) discussed in Chapter 3 above, i. e.:

(d) how far did students share the official view of the goals and distinctive approach of the colleges?

(e) what degree of integration and shared perspective did students perceive between academic and vocational, and full and part time areas of work and students?

(f) how far did they perceive pastoral care arrangements for students to be effective?

(g) how far were particular forms of organization and college size linked with differences in (d) to (f) above?

Senior staff and college documents put forward a number of claims about the particular educational and social benefits that tertiary colleges provided for students, as compared with other types of 16-19 provision. The student survey sought to discover how far these claims were borne out in the experiences of students themselves. As discussed in Chapter 4.3, principals and other senior staff expressed some caveats about the extent to which a more 'extended' or egalitarian version of comprehensiveness could be achieved in practice, as compared with a more limited or meritocratic version.

Nonetheless, it was argued that the colleges set out to achieve the following goals with respect to the research questions above:

question (d): to provide for each student a programme of study suited to her/his individual needs, abilities and interests; to offer the opportunity to study a mix of academic and vocational elements; to develop a distinctive 'tertiary' community ethos;

question (e): to foster parity of esteem between academic and vocational areas of study, and to achieve a degree of integration between them; to enable social mixing between students on different types of courses and, as far as possible, between full- and part-time students.

question (f): to provide appropriate pastoral care for students, including enabling them to make a smooth transition from school to college, and

achieving a balance between treating students as adults and keeping an overview of their work and progress.

If these aims were being achieved in practice, at least to some extent, from the perspectives of students, one would expect students to express positive attitudes and high levels of satisfaction with respect to these factors.

6.2 Research question (d): Extent to which students shared college goals and ethos

The study explored full-time student views on three main issues in relation to this question:

(1) students' level of satisfaction with their own course programmes;

(2) the extent to which they were studying a mix of academic and vocational elements;

(3) the general atmosphere or ethos of the college.

6.2.1 Course programmes

The study examined students' attitudes towards their own course programmes, including the various elements of the course and how far they felt they had been able to choose a programme of studies appropriate to their own interests and needs. It was argued by principals that providing an *individual* programme of studies suited to the needs of each student was an important goal of the colleges (see Chapter 4.3). Proponents of the colleges suggested that in offering the full range of course provision for the 16-19 age

group, the colleges could meet these needs more effectively than other types of organization. As Janes and Miles (1978) put it:

> *'The tertiary college ... is uniquely fitted with human and material teaching resources ... [to enable] the school leaver to choose his/her individual programme. The menu should be à la carte, not table d'hôte'* (p 2).

However, merely offering a broad range of provision does not necessarily mean that students will see their needs to be catered for appropriately. External factors, such as exam board syllabuses, and internal factors, such as split sites and timetabling issues, and policy decisions about appropriate course elements and combinations, may act as constraints. Also, as mentioned above, there is a tension in provision for the 16-19 age group between what students regard as their needs and adults' (i.e. teachers', parents', employers') perceptions of student needs.

Students were asked if they were taking their first choice of course, whether they were taking any subjects they didn't wish to study and whether there were any subjects they would like to take but were unable to do so. Results are shown below.

	% agree	**N**
First choice	79.9	832
Unwanted subject(s)	33.5	343
Subject(s) unable to take	32.1	330

Proportions of students taking their first choice indicate that the colleges were meeting the goal of providing for individual student course needs to a relatively large extent. As one might expect, A level students were most likely to agree with this item and O level students least likely (89.3% and 58.1% agreement, respectively). Many students taking

O level courses were doing so because their school examination results were inadequate for entry to other courses, and were therefore retaking these exams to improve grades or increase the number of O level passes prior to undertaking other courses.

20.1% of students (N=209) were not taking their first choice of course. Reasons given by these students for not taking their first choice are shown in Appendix 6, Table 6a. The most frequently mentioned reason was lack of qualifications. Other reasons related to students' perceived HE or career needs. The majority of reasons given by students for not taking their first choice were constraining factors relating to lack of qualifications or personal circumstances, rather than factors within the control of the colleges, such as timetabling constraints or oversubscribed courses (e.g. reasons 2, 4 and 7 in Table 6a).

Students were also asked whether they were studying any subject(s) they did not wish to take. A surprisingly high proportion of just over a third (33.5% N=343) indicated that they were doing so. There were no significant inter college differences on this item, but again a disparity between students on different types of course, with A level students being the least likely to be taking unwanted subjects, and TEC and C & G students the most likely. Analysis of reasons for taking unwanted subjects (see Table 6b in Appendix 6) showed that for many students, the unwanted subjects were compulsory elements of the timetable. In the case of TEC and C & G courses, the syllabus was quite closely prescribed by the awarding body, and filled virtually all of the weekly timetable. Another reason given for taking unwanted subjects was that they were necessary for future careers or education. Again, as with the first choice of course issue, reasons for taking unwanted subjects related less to factors within the control of the colleges than to other factors, in this case, external requirements.

Respondents were also asked whether there were any subjects they would like to take but were unable to study. Again, a relatively high proportion (32.1%, N=330) indicated that this was the case. Reasons given (see Appendix 6, Table 6c) included 'not enough

time/other subjects more important, not part of the course syllabus'. These points suggest that purely practical constraints of priority and time, rather than college-determined policy and practice, played an important part here. On the other hand, there were disparities between colleges on this item, ranging from 22.2% in College 10 to 50% in College 4 ($p=< 0.5\%$) unable to take subjects they would like to study. This would tend to suggest that college policy, e.g. on timetabling, and other college-related factors such as split sites, were also having an effect. This interpretation is supported by two of the most frequently given reasons for not taking subjects students would like to study: timetable clash and subject(s) not offered by the college (see Appendix 6, Table 6c).

Although rather high proportions of students were studying unwanted subjects and unable to take subjects they would like to study, two points should be emphasized here. First it should be noted that surveys of student satisfaction with course choice (see e.g. Dean *et al.*, 1979) have shown some ambivalence in student views on this issue. Second, a large proportion of the reasons given for being unable to take respondent's first choice of course, and the other two areas of choice discussed above, related to students' personal circumstances (e.g. lack of qualifications) or to external demands (e.g. employer/HE requirements) rather than to factors within the control of the colleges. The finding that about 80% of respondents were studying their first choice suggests that the colleges' claim to provide a range of choice to meet individual student needs was being met to a considerable extent.

In meeting what they defined as students' normative needs (Bradshaw, 1972), the colleges' curricular aims for students incorporated elements of compulsion, as well as choice. For full time students, the colleges sought to provide breadth and balance in course programmes. Thus, for example, College 4's prospectus noted that staff *'will need to be convinced that every student is following a balanced programme ...* '; College 3's prospectus stated that:

> *'every [full time] student's chosen course is broadened by the addition of a general education programme, consisting of: physical education, including individual and team games; and general studies, including a wide range of subjects which may be selected according to individual preference.'*

However, studies of 16-19 student perspectives on course provision (see e.g. Dean *et al.* (1979) and King (1976), have shown that students themselves are often less than enthusiastic about attempts to broaden their range of studies, for example by the inclusion of general/complementary studies in A level and in C & G, and BTEC course. Thus, for example, the Dean *et al.* (1979) study found that students in all types of post-16 institution were highly instrumental in their attitudes towards education. Most students were strongly

> *'subject-or specialist-minded' ...'Most of the students adopted the attitude that examination work was all-important and anything which in their view, did not contribute directly to their final examination performance was resented'* (p. 155).

> *'The overall impression created by students' comments is that they would prefer to avoid general studies altogether'* (p. 159).

Similarly, a more recent study by Higham *et al.* (1996) found that curricular elements designed to broaden students' course programmes:

> *'... struggled for time, resources, commitment and status. It was invariably the main courses which counted for most with students and teachers'* (p. 160).

It was therefore important to investigate student views on the various elements in their courses to see whether they shared the colleges' views on the importance of breadth and balance in programmes of study. Respondents were asked whether, if given an open choice, they would have liked to take a broader course taking more subjects, and whether they would have preferred to concentrate on fewer subjects. Only 12.4% of respondents (N=128) would have preferred a broader course. On the other hand, a much larger proportion (23.8%, N=246) would have liked a narrower course, focusing on fewer subjects. The main reasons given were the need for more time to study main subjects (91 respondents), and the wish to gain a deeper understanding of, or particular interest in, core subjects studied (86 respondents). These results would seem to reflect very similar priorities to those expressed in the Dean *et al.* (1979) study. While a small proportion would have preferred a broader course, a much larger proportion were in favour of even more specialization, giving more time for in-depth study of main subjects.

Respondents were also asked about the balance between various elements of their course programme, indicating whether too much time, about the right amount, or too little was spent on each of four main components: (1) main subjects, (2) general studies, (3) sports/PE, (4) private study. Results for the overall sample are shown in Table 6.1.

	Time spent, percentages				
	too much	**about the right amount**	**too little**	**not on my time-table**	**N=**
Main subjects	4.5	79.8	15.7	–	1028
General studies	17.5	39.3	9.0	34.1	1015
Sports/PE	5.0	29.5	15.9	49.7	1021
Private study time	5.0	47.3	30.9	16.7	1031

Table 6.1: Student views on the balance of time spent on various elements of their course programmes

While few students thought that too much time was spent on main subjects, sports and private study, a much larger proportion felt that too much of the time-table was devoted to general studies - a result reflecting the generally negative attitudes towards this area of work found in other research (Dean *et al.*, 1979; Higham *et al.*, 1996). The vast majority thought that about the right amount of time was spent on their main subjects, though 15.7% thought that too little time was spent, again indicating the instrumental approach of students, mentioned earlier. Much lower proportions felt that about the right amount of time was spent on other areas of work, with relatively high proportions reporting that these were not included in their timetables. This applied in particular to sports/PE, which nearly half the students reported as not included, and 15.9% felt that too little time was provided for this. Most of the sampled colleges reserved Wednesday afternoons for sports and recreational activities, following the fairly widespread practice in FE colleges. For a few courses it was not possible to reserve this time for sport, for example, when students were on work placements for part of their timetables. However, since sport/recreational activities were often seen by students as optional (though varying degrees of persuasion were used in different colleges, and different courses, to get students to participate), many students regarded Wednesday afternoons as free time and

did not attend college, as the figures here reflect, despite the fact that the colleges saw some form of physical activity as a core element in full-time student course programmes. This provides an example of the problems of providing a 'balanced' curriculum for voluntary participants!

There were significant inter-college differences in student perspectives on the balance of time allocated to the various elements of their course programmes. Results for main subjects and general studies are shown in Appendix 6, Tables 6d and 6e. The results reflect the colleges' differing policies with respect to the balance between course elements, and differences in the extent to which the aim of a broad and balanced curriculum was enforced. Thus for example, at College 3 (see extract from prospectus above) the requirement that all students should take general studies was firmly adhered to, and thus no students in the sample reported this element as not part of their timetables. Most other colleges showed quite substantial proportions of students reporting general studies as not part of their timetables, despite the professed aim of the colleges to promote a broad and balanced curriculum. Both in colleges where there was a strong degree of compulsion on students to broaden their course programmes and in those where compulsion was less marked, quite substantial proportions of students wanted to spend more time on main subjects, and less on general studies. These findings support the results relating to breadth of course programmes discussed above, and the findings of the Dean *et al.* (1979) and Higham *et al.* (1996) studies, in suggesting that students took a strongly instrumental approach to their education and preferred to focus on examined subjects. Despite the colleges' provision of a very wide range of general studies, recreational and sports options, and emphasis on the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum, students did not in general share the official view of this aspect of their curricular needs. This would seem to suggest something of a mismatch between students' normative needs as defined by the colleges and students' own interpretations of their needs. However, this problem is not specific to tertiary colleges, and reflects the

tension between adults' interpretations of young peoples' needs and student perceptions of their own requirements (Bradshaw, 1972).

6.2.2 Mixed economy courses

The second aspect of research question (d) explored here is the extent to which students were able to take a 'mixed economy' course. This has been described as a 'defining feature' of tertiary colleges (Barrow, 1990), though as discussed in Chapter 4.3, some principals and senior staff were cautious about the feasibility and desirability of a mix of academic and vocational elements, largely because of HE and employer expectations. The extent to which students were taking mixed economy courses was examined by analysing students' reported course components. They were asked to indicate on the questionnaire the courses and subjects they were currently studying. In analysis of the questionnaire data, courses studied were grouped into eight broad categories, including a 'mixed' category for those course programmes which included both A/O levels and a vocational area of study such as TEC/BEC or secretarial studies. Table 6.2 shows results for the overall sample, with individual college distributions in Table 6.3.

	Type of course	N=	%
1	A levels	245	23.3
2	0 levels	168	16.0
3	A & O levels	88	8.4
4	'Mixed' GCE + vocational	89	8.5
5	BEC General/National	156	14.8
6	TEC	123	11.7
7	City & Guilds	131	12.5
8	Secretarial and other	50	4.8
	Total	1050	100

Table 6.2: Distribution of students by course

As Table 6.3 indicates, there were considerable differences between the individual college samples in type of course being studied. The figures reflect the differing policies of the colleges towards 'mixed' course provision. While some encouraged the possibility of combining 'academic' and 'vocational' options, providing timetable flexibility to enable various combinations, other colleges were less enthusiastic, arguing that the need for coherent, careers-oriented programmes of study meant that it was not appropriate for students to undertake a mixed programme for public examination. These colleges instead made provision for broadening students' focus in programmes of general/liberal studies (see Chapter 4.3).

College No.	Course type, percentages			
	GCE only	**Mixed**	**Vocational only**	**N=100%**
1	52.4	23.3	24.5	86
2	29.2	31.9	38.8	72
3	39.0	10.0	51.0	100
4	67.7	6.3	26.0	96
5	40.5	6.6	52.9	106
6	48.8	3.5	47.6	87
7	44.7	1.0	54.4	102
8	48.8	0	51.2	87
9	60.0	0	40.0	104
10	53.3	0	46.6	102
11	38.6	14.9	46.6	100
Total	47.9	8.1	44.0	1042

Table 6.3: Course type by college

Principals and senior staff in these colleges argued that provision for mixing academic and vocational elements was best done through non-examined options, in general and complementary studies, giving students the chance to sample areas of the curriculum they would not usually encounter. However, the views of students on curriculum breadth and general studies discussed above indicate students' lack of enthusiasm for non-examined areas of the curriculum, and suggest that students may not have welcomed this opportunity. Overall, while the aim to provide mixed economy courses was clearly pursued in some colleges and taken up by students (see especially Colleges 1, 2 and 11),

for the most part, while the colleges had the potential for this type of course, the opportunity was not developed to any great extent in practice in the majority of colleges. These findings tend to suggest an 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between official policy and students' actual curricular programmes.

6.2.3 The atmosphere or ethos of the college

The study sought to explore how far students shared the official view that the colleges had developed a relatively integrated culture and ethos. Three areas of the student questionnaire contributed to the examination of their views on the general atmosphere or ethos of their colleges. First, a set of attitude statements was designed to elicit student views on various aspects of their life and work at college. Second, students were asked to indicate whether they felt they were better or worse off in college rather than a school sixth form. Third, they were asked to identify three good points and three bad points of their colleges. Analysis of answers to this question showed that a considerable proportion of responses were concerned with factors relating to the general atmosphere of the college. These items are discussed below.

(a) General atmosphere and life and work at college

Student perspectives on college ethos were examined by means of a set of attitude statements. These statements comprised a number of positive and negative comments on college life with which students were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement. Five categories of response were provided, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with a neutral 'don't know' category. Positive and negative items were intermingled in the questionnaire in order to avoid problems of response set (see e.g. Coolican, 1990, for a discussion of this difficulty).

There are, of course, considerable problems in interpreting and comparing attitudes as measured by such opinion statements (see e.g. Oppenheim (1966). Not least of these is that the precise wording of the statements can have a considerable effect on the results obtained. Bearing this caveat in mind, it was possible to make a broad comparison between the findings reported here and those of King's (1976) and the Dean *et al.* (1979) studies of students in post-compulsory education discussed in Chapter 2.7, to see how tertiary college student views on the general atmosphere of their institutions compared with the views of students in other types of 16-19 education. If students in tertiary colleges expressed more positive views than those in other types of organization, this would lend some support to the claims of senior staff that the tertiary colleges had managed to establish a distinctive ethos to best meet the needs of 16-19 year old students.

Similarly worded items from the King and Dean *et al.* studies will be compared where relevant, though it should be stressed that these should be seen only as broad indicators; precise comparisons of specific percentages would be misleading. It should also be noted that King's study included only one tertiary college, which had been recently established and hence may not reflect 'typical' student views. The Dean *et al.* sample included three tertiary colleges; the majority of student views reported here from that study were provided by students who had completed a two year course at the college and had recently entered work or HE. Views in the tertiary colleges study are those of students who were still attending college, having been there for at least a term.

The items selected for the set of attitude statements were drawn from the literature and from student comments about aspects of their life and work at college in the pilot stage of this study. The items are shown in Table 6.4 below together with overall proportions of students agreeing with positive items and disagreeing with negative ones. Table 6f in Appendix 6 shows details of all response categories. The items, which were intermixed

in the questionnaire, have been regrouped in Table 6.4 into the various categories of life and work at college covered in the set of attitude statements.

(a)	***General atmosphere and ethos***	*%ages*
1	This college has a friendly atmosphere	84.2
2	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived at college	78.2
3	The college is impersonal and unfriendly	85.0*
4	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	68.4
(b)	***Extent to which students are treated as adults***	
5	There are too many rules and regulations	78.4*
6	I feel that students are treated as adults here	76.5
7	The college gives students too much freedom	82.9*
(c)	***Social relationships with students***	
8	I have made a lot of friends since I came to college	84.7
9 +	I don't know many staff or students at college	80.6*
(d)	***Relationships with staff***	
9 +	I don't know many staff or students at college	80.6*
10	The staff are not interested in the students as people	75.7*
11	I feel I know some staff well	68.4
	College work:	
(e)	***General views***	

12	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	81.9
13	I shall be sorry to leave college	41.9
14	College life is a good preparation for going to work or future education	78.3
15	I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job	67.3*
16	If I had the choice again I would not come to college	77.8*
(f)	***Extent of supervision and help from staff***	
17	Students are not made to work hard enough	70.7*
18	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	59.5
19	Students are expected to work by themselves too much before they are able to	63.5
(g)	***Exam pressure***	
20	The college is only interested in students passing exams	59.6*

Table 6.4: Student attitudes to college

Note: Table shows % agree/strongly agree for positive items, and % disagree/strongly disagree for negative items (marked*). + Item 9 is listed under headings (c) and (d) as it relates to both.

As the relatively high proportions of students expressing positive views on items 1-3 suggest, the large majority of respondents regarded their colleges as having a happy and friendly atmosphere, providing a positive endorsement of the colleges' ethos. The rather

lower percentage of positive responses to item 4 perhaps reflects some uncertainty among respondents owing to the broadness of the question.

The next set of items was concerned with the extent to which students felt they were treated as adults, an aspect of institutional life which previous studies had found to play an important part in students' levels of satisfaction with various forms of 16-19 provision. The relatively high proportion of positive views with respect to items 5-7 suggests that the difficult balance between too much and too little autonomy for this age group was being achieved reasonably successfully. These findings tend to support those of King (1976) and Dean *et al.* (1979) shown below:

	Percentage agreement		
	Schools and 6th form colleges	Tertiary colleges	FE colleges
In the college/6th form you are treated as an adult	50	65	55
There are unnecessary restrictions in the 6th/college	46	16	32

King (1976): Student attitudes

Mean ratings by students in various types of institution

(1 = not all, 5 = very much)

	Comp. school	Grammar school	6th form college	Tertiary college	FE college
It made it possible for students to be treated like adults	3.2	2.7	3.7	3.9	3.8
It had fewer rules concerning behaviour, attendance, dress	3.0	2.2	4.1	4.3	4.0

Dean *et al.* (1979): Student attitudes

While both earlier studies suggest that students in tertiary colleges expressed slightly more positive views with respect to these items than those in other types of institution, the current study reinforces this and indicates highly favourable views on these issues.

Items 8-11 examined social relationships with students and staff. Again, student perspectives were largely positive. The slightly lower level of agreement with item 11 indicates some student uncertainty about how well they know staff, though it should be remembered that some 54% of the sample were first year students, some of whom had been at college for only just over one term at the time of the survey.

Comparison with similarly worded items in the King (1976) survey (below) indicates that a rather larger proportion of students in the current study felt that tertiary colleges were providing a situation where it was easy for most to make friends among students, and to establish informal relationships with staff. It might be tentatively suggested that tertiary colleges may have been moving towards the development of a community atmosphere and ethos more traditionally associated with school sixth forms, than with FE.

	Percentage agreement		
	Schools and 6th form colleges	Tertiary colleges	FE colleges
Relationships with students:			
It is easy to make friends in school/college	77	67	71
Relationships with staff:			
I feel I know some staff well	60	44	44
Staff are interested in students' personal welfare	55	48	46

King (1976): Student attitudes

Student perspectives on the various aspects of their work at college examined in categories (e) - (g) in Table 6.4 were also broadly very positive. Views on items 13 and 15 however, showed some ambivalence in student perceptions of the benefits of being at college as opposed to having full-time employment. This was also reflected in the rather high 'don't know' answers to the statements - at 14.8% and 9.3% respectively, these were the two largest proportions of 'don't know' responses in all 20 items (see Table 6f in Appendix 6). This ambivalence may be partly accounted for by students' recognition of the financial drawbacks of remaining in full-time education, mentioned by many students in additional comments at the end of the questionnaire. Students tended to compare their own financial position with the incomes of part-time day release students. The relative lack of affluence of full-time students may be more sharply evident to those in tertiary and FE colleges where they are in closer contact with part-time students, than to students in sixth forms and sixth form colleges.

King's (1976) findings on the extent of help with and supervision of students' work are shown below, and suggest less positive views than those of students in the current study.

Similarly, students in the tertiary college examined by King expressed lower levels of satisfaction about the degree to which college prepared them well for progression to work or future education.

	Percentage agreement		
	Schools and 6th form colleges	Tertiary colleges	FE colleges
There is enough individual help	49	57	49
You decided for yourself how much work you do	85	73	69
College is a good preparation for going to work	-	49	-
College is a good preparation for future education	-	74	-

King (1976): Student attitudes

The final item in Table 6.4 was concerned with perceived pressure to pass exams. Students, overall percentage disagreement with the statement 'the college is only interested in students passing exams' was 59.6%, indicating that quite a high proportion saw this as an excessive concern, reflecting the views expressed by some staff, (exemplified in Chapter 5.1.2), about pressures to produce a high standard of examination results. However, comparison with the range of 16-19 institutions examined in other studies (see below) suggests that this was a lesser problem in tertiary colleges than other types of organization.

	Percentage agreement					
	Comp. school	Grammar school	6th form college	Tertiary college	FE college	Total
There was an excessive concern with getting students through exams	79	83	74	65	77	76

Dean *et al.* (1979): Student attitudes

	Percentage agreement		
	Schools and 6th form colleges	Tertiary college	FE colleges
There is a strong emphasis on exams	83	62	77

King (1976): Student attitudes

Overall, the evidence from the attitude statements indicates relatively high levels of student satisfaction with the general atmosphere of their colleges, and life and work within them. Comparison with the two earlier studies suggests that student views in tertiary colleges were broadly more positive in tertiary colleges than in other types of 16-19 institutions, with students in the study reported here showing rather higher levels of satisfaction than those in the tertiary colleges studied by Dean *et al.* (1979) and King (1976). These results would tend to suggest that the tertiary colleges were succeeding, to a large extent, in developing a distinctive ethos matched to the needs of 16-19 students. In this respect the claims of principals seemed to be borne out by student views.

(b) Comparison between college and school

It was also important to examine whether students felt that they were better off in college than they would be at school. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, protagonists of tertiary (and sixth form) colleges, and those working within them (see e.g. Terry, 1987), argued that students prefer college-based forms of 16-19 provision, because the colleges provide a more adult environment and greater independence for students than school sixth forms. The research studies by King (1976) and Dean *et al.* (1979) supported these claims. On the other hand, defenders of the school sixth form (see e.g. NUT, 1979) suggested that students transferring to post-16 colleges would miss the community atmosphere of the sixth form, with close staff-student relationships and associated pastoral care, and the leadership responsibilities involved in supervising younger pupils.

Respondents were therefore asked whether they felt they were better off, worse off, or about the same as they would be in a school sixth form, judging by what they knew about sixth forms. Results are shown in Table 6.5 below. These findings and students' reasons for feeling that they were better off (see Table 6g in Appendix 6) tended to support the arguments for separate post 16 provision discussed in Chapter 1.2. The most frequently mentioned reasons were that students were treated more as adults at college, there was more freedom and fewer restrictions, better staff and teaching, and a wider range of facilities. Analysis of answers on what students missed most and least about school also provided little evidence that students missed the community atmosphere of school. Over a quarter of respondents mentioned friends as the aspect of school they missed most, with nearly a quarter claiming to miss nothing. Only 6.2% (N=72) of the sample overall mentioned factors relating to the ethos of the sixth form, e.g. its smaller, more close-knit nature. Nearly 15% of the sample mentioned staff and staff attitudes as factors they missed least about school, with discipline, rules, and school rituals (such as assemblies and uniforms) as other frequently mentioned aspects. Student views on this issue and the positive and negative features of school life that they mentioned tend to

endorse the findings of other studies and the claims put forward by the tertiary college principals about the adult atmosphere and freedom from restriction that their organizations provided.

	N=	%age
Better off	476	50.4
Worse off	74	7.8
About the same	188	19.9
Don't know	206	21.8
Total	944	100

Table 6.5: Whether better/worse off at college than a school sixth form

(c) Good and bad aspects of college

Students were asked to list three 'good points' and three 'bad points' of their colleges. These open ended questions provided a means of exploring what students themselves saw as the key characteristics of the ethos of their colleges. It was of interest whether their responses would echo issues covered in the pre-coded items or whether different factors would be raised. A total of 910 students responded to the question on good points. Only 6 suggested that there were none, some 20% identified 1 or 2 points, and 78.5% identified three good points. Answers were coded into seven broad categories (see Table 6h in Appendix 6). Responses tended to support the generally positive views on the atmosphere and ethos of the colleges that emerged from the analysis of other questionnaire items discussed above. Over a quarter of responses (27.6%) identified good points relating to the general atmosphere of the college and the friendliness of staff and students. Other student comments on good points mentioned the expressive aspects of college life, norms of behaviour and the way in which students were treated by staff

(see Torrington and Weightman, 1993), as opposed to more tangible factors such as range of courses and facilities. Thus, while some of the good points noted in relation to staff identified the quality of teachers and teaching, others referred to the interpersonal aspects of teaching and learning, including such comments as:

'helpful, approachable staff'

'the majority of tutors are most helpful and willing to give advice'

'personal attention and concern from staff'.

Factors relating to the scope offered by college for students' personal and social development also featured prominently in lists of good points. Areas mentioned included being treated as adults and being given responsibility for one's own work and progress, opportunities to develop motivation, self-discipline and self confidence.

'Bad points' identified by students are shown in Table 6i in Appendix 6. With respect to 'bad points', lower proportions of responses referred directly to factors related to the general atmosphere and ethos (8.7% as compared with 27.6% of 'good point' responses), suggesting a broadly favourable perception of college ethos. Over 50% of bad points referred to facilities and equipment, which, again, can be interpreted in positive terms as regards the ethos of the college and areas of teaching quality and curriculum content, which received much less critical comment than material factors. Although issues relating to the general atmosphere of the college received much less critical than positive comment, some of the other bad points identified related to the affective aspects of college life, including difficulty in communicating with staff, and factors relating to personal development, e.g. that students had too much freedom, or that regulations were too strict and that students were not treated as adults. These points contradict some of the positive comments made about adult treatment and the absence of undue restrictions.

This reflects the diversity of views and differing perspectives among the student body about the appropriate balance between independence and control referred to earlier. Nonetheless, negative points relating to the atmosphere of the college and its expressive aspects were less prominent than favourable comments about these aspects.

Overall, student responses in relation to research question (d) indicated that, in broad terms, the colleges' goal of providing an individual course programme to meet the needs of each student was being achieved to a considerable extent. Students also recognized and shared the ethos that the colleges sought to develop, although in most colleges there was limited participation in 'mixed economy' courses. Most students were studying their first choice of course, felt they were better off than in a sixth form, and viewed the various aspects of their life and work in college in a positive light. While student views reflected some reservations about the appropriate breadth and balance of the curriculum, these concerns, based on a largely instrumental, exam-focused approach to their education, were not peculiar to tertiary colleges but were very similar to those of students in other types of post-16 education.

6.3 Research question (e): Integration between academic and vocational, full and part time areas of work

Question (e) was concerned with the extent to which the colleges had been able to break down the traditional barriers between academic and vocational areas of work, which remain largely separate in other forms of post-16 provision. Staff views on the organizational, attitudinal and social aspects of this issue were examined in Chapter 5, Sections 5.1 and 5.2. Since students lack a basis for comparison of different types of post - 16 provision, they could not be expected to have any clear views about organizational factors, except where these factors directly affected their experiences of college. Of particular relevance here was how far a greater degree of

academic/vocational integration provided students with the opportunity to study 'mixed economy' courses. Evidence of the limited extent of this as shown by students' course programmes was discussed in relation to research question (d) above (see Section 6.2.2). Attitudinal issues arising from organizational restructuring, such as the problems involved in developing a shared perspective among ex-school and ex-FE staff and areas of work (see Chapter 5.2) were not something that impinged directly on students' experiences of their colleges.

The study therefore focused on their views relating to the *social* aspects of this question. It was argued by the tertiary college principals and others that bringing together all post-16 provision under one roof helped to foster social integration and parity of esteem among all students. It also offered students social benefits in terms of the opportunity to mix with a wide range of students from across the college, and in terms of being able to support a wider range of social and extra-curricular activities than other types of post-16 provision. It was also suggested that the opportunity to participate in the students' union offered further scope for the development of co-operation and mutual understanding among students following very different course routes. The study therefore looked at the following indicators as a means of assessing the extent to which this 'integrative' aim was being achieved by the colleges:

(1) students' reported participation in extra-curricular and social activities, including the students' union (SU); and

(2) their friendship patterns, and opportunities to meet students on other courses.

6.3.1 Extra-curricular activities and Students' Union

Respondents were asked to list any college sports, recreational and cultural activities that they took an active part in, including membership of college clubs and societies, but

excluding activities that were part of their timetabled programmes of study. Results are shown in Table 6j in Appendix 6. A large proportion of respondents (some 52%) gave no answer to this question. As only 12 students failed to answer the next questionnaire item, it can be assumed that those who listed no activities did not take part in any. A considerable proportion also indicated explicitly that they took part in no extra curricular activities. Of those remaining, just over 29% were involved in one or more sports activities. Less than 15% and 10% respectively indicated any cultural or social activities. In the former category, students listed such activities as college orchestra or choir, drama and film groups, and in the latter mainly activities such as student dances and discos and other social activities organized by the students' union. These results would seem to suggest that despite the excellent facilities enjoyed by many of the colleges, and the expressed aims of staff to encourage social integration through extra-curricular activities, there was little evidence, even among full time students, of any substantial degree of student involvement in out-of-class college events, clubs and societies, though sporting activities were more strongly supported than other extra- curricular areas.

Similar results were found for involvement in students' unions (see Table 6k in Appendix 6). Only 11.5% of respondents overall usually attended SU meetings, with some 52% claiming never to attend meetings. While nearly a quarter of respondents felt that the SU played an important part in the life of the college, some 40% felt that it did not while the remainder, approaching 40%, did not know. On the other hand nearly 60% of students felt that the SU *should* play an important part in college life, suggesting considerable potential scope for the development of its role. Overall, students' reported involvement in extra curricular and SU activities provided little evidence for suggesting that these activities provided a vehicle for increasing social integration among students following different courses.

6.3.2 Friendship patterns and opportunities to meet other students

As another means of assessing the extent to which some degree of social interaction was occurring between students on different course programmes, respondents were asked about their friendship groups and opportunities to meet other students. Students were asked whether most of their friends were:

old school friends now attending college, new friends made at college or friends outside college, selecting *only one of these response categories* (see Table 6.6).

	N=	**%age**
Old friends from school now at college	182	18.1
New friends made at college	603	60.1
Friends outside college	143	14.2
Ringed more than one category	76	7.6
Total	1004	100

Table 6.6: Friendship patterns

Results would seem to indicate a fairly high degree of social mixing within college, though, of course, much of this may have been within course groups rather than across them. Relatively few students reported mixing largely with friends outside college.

Respondents were also asked whether they had much opportunity to meet students on other courses and whether they would like more chances to do so (see Tables 6.7 and 6.8). Results indicate at least a fair amount of opportunity to interact across course groupings for just over half of the sample, though a large minority perceived little scope

for this. While over a quarter of respondents would have welcomed more opportunities to meet those on other courses, the rather large proportion of 'don't know' answers suggests some ambivalence or lack of enthusiasm about this. Despite the concern of the colleges to encourage social integration, and to encourage greater understanding among students following different routes, students themselves may prefer to mix largely within the course groups with which they spend their timetabled programme at college. Students tend to link their social identity largely to the groups in which they are taught, rather than seeking wider social contacts (see Woods, 1995).

	N=	**%age**
A great deal	161	16.1
A fair amount	397	39.8
Not very much	376	37.7
None at all	63	6.3
Total	997	100

Table 6.7: Opportunity to meet students on other courses

	N=	**%age**
Yes	277	27.8
No	207	20.7
Don't know	514	51.5
Total	998	100

Table 6.8: Whether respondents would welcome more opportunity to meet students on other courses

Respondents who would have welcomed more opportunities to meet others were asked to indicate in what ways they would like to do so, and their answers were coded into a number of broad categories. The most frequently mentioned suggestions related to social activities, more discos, dances and college trips. The next largest response category suggested various methods of closer integration between student groups in class time, e.g. mixed course groups for general studies, sports, or discussions/debates between various course groups. Smaller numbers of respondents addressed the question of *why* they would like more opportunities to meet others, including: to see how they approached their work, and how interesting their courses were, and to widen one's horizon and understanding by hearing about the views of other students.

As discussed in Chapter 4.3, college principals and senior staff saw the social integration goal of the tertiary colleges as an important one, though with varying degrees of emphasis. Many linked this aim to the extended notion of comprehensiveness in terms of developing mutual understanding and parity of esteem among students following different routes, with others taking a more cautious stance about the feasibility and extent of social interaction among students. Most colleges made considerable efforts to achieve this aim, particularly through the promotion of extra curricular activities, encouraging the SU, and by cross-departmental timetabling so that students from a range of courses would be together for general studies and sports activities. Many of the colleges had excellent facilities and had developed special strengths in such areas as sports, music and drama. Students were, of course, able to meet others also during break and lunch-times. All the colleges had canteens and some form of student common room, though often the latter was less than comfortable.

Evidence from the student survey on how far some degree of student integration was evident or desirable was rather mixed. On the one hand, a majority of students reported at least some opportunity to meet those on other courses and felt that the SU *should* play a greater role in college life. On the other hand, with the exception of sport, there was

little evidence of widespread student participation in extra-curricular and SU activities, and a large degree of ambivalence in students' attitudes towards developing wider social links across the college. It would seem that the broader opportunities, beyond the curriculum, offered by the colleges were pursued largely by a small group of enthusiasts.

There were obvious practical constraints such as split site operation and the difficulty of timetable co-ordination across all departments and sub units. A factor mentioned by a number of students in rural colleges with wide catchment areas was the difficulty of organising transport home for those wishing to take part in events after the college day. Conversely, as regards colleges situated in or near large population centres, students noted the large range of competing activities and events that could act as a disincentive to taking part in college activities. College accommodation and facilities (e.g. lack of a sports hall or playing field), and policy about allowing such activities as student discos, were also relevant here.

Student *attitudes* may also have played a part in inhibiting a wider degree of student interaction. A number of respondents for example suggested student apathy as an important constraint here. Student responses suggested that the majority were content to mix within their own course groups or were uncertain about the benefits of wider opportunities to meet others. In this respect, their aspirations about social mixing may have been less far-reaching than those of senior managers who perceived this goal within the broader framework of comprehensive education principles. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, institutional goals are not necessarily shared by members, and are reinterpreted by them in terms of their own perspectives.

6.4 Research question (f): Pastoral care and guidance

The issue of pastoral care was an important one for tertiary colleges. As discussed in Chapter 1, critics of a break at 16 argued that a change of institution would be disruptive

for students, that guidance on course choice would not be informed by a close knowledge of the student and her/his needs, and that guidance on personal matters, work and progress and careers was also likely to be less effective in an institution in which students usually only spend 1-2 years and which may be characterized by an instrumental, associationist ideology, as compared with the welfarist community ideology of school sixth forms (King, 1976).

Given these concerns about the potential problems of a break at 16, the colleges had paid particular attention to the issue of pastoral care, including induction to college and guidance on course choice (see Chapter 4.3). Indeed, with respect to this last issue, it was argued that, as the sole provider (with partial exceptions) of post-16 provision in its area, the tertiary college was more likely to provide impartial advice on course choice, directed towards students needs, as compared to the situation where there is more than one post-16 institution (e.g. sixth form/sixth form college and FE college) and each has a vested interest in recruiting students to its own courses. Staff in general felt that pastoral care was relatively well provided for in their colleges (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29). The student questionnaire therefore sought to discover whether students themselves found the transition to college as disruptive as some commentators claimed, and whether they felt that pastoral provision was adequate in the areas of personal guidance, work and progress, and careers advice.

6.4.1 Transition to college

Two main issues were important here: work related and personal factors, i.e. appropriate guidance on course choice, and the extent to which students felt they were able to settle down quickly in the new environment of college. Student perspectives on the adequacy of guidance on course choice (see below) suggest that there was considerable demand for more student support.

		%age
I had enough help and information		43.2
Would have liked a little more help and information		41.0
Would have liked a lot more help and information		15.9
	N=1045	100

It might of course be argued that the area of pre-course guidance is one where demand is never completely satisfied, i.e. students are likely to request more information, however generous the resources that are devoted to it (see FEU, 1989). However, since more help would have been preferred by well over half the respondents, this area of provision probably merited more attention by the colleges and their contributory schools, particularly in the light of the wide range of course programmes on offer.

Respondents' views on the amount of time taken to settle down and feel at home at college are shown in Table 6.9. As the results indicate, the process of transfer to college does not seem to have been very difficult, with nearly 60% of respondents having settled down within two weeks and the majority of the rest doing so within a term. On the other hand, the finding that 6.4% took over a term suggests that there were problems here for a minority of students. Girls were also more likely to take longer to settle down than boys: whereas 65.2% of boys claimed to have adjusted to college in 2 weeks or less, only 51.5% of girls did so. This suggests that girls may have needed particular help in adapting to the new college environment.

	N=	%age
1 week	223	21.7
2 weeks	371	36.0
1 month	271	26.3
a term	97	9.4
more than a term	66	6.4
Total	1028	100

Table 6.9: Time taken to settle down at college

Students were also asked to indicate the main problems in adjusting to life at college (see Appendix 6, Table 6l). The major difficulties identified all related to aspects of respondents' work at college, rather than social and interpersonal factors, such as making new friends. In particular, the main difficulties were: adapting to an independent approach to work, organising one's own notes and reading, getting used to new courses/subjects not studied at school, organising one's own private study and homework, and the higher standard and greater depth of work. Of course it can be argued that study patterns were likely to be considerably different for all post 16 students, whether or not they changed institutions, and thus they would all be subject to a change in learning demands and expectations, including those students who remained in 11-18 schools. Earlier studies had found that students in all types of 16-19 institution found some difficulties in adjusting to post-16 study demands (see Dean *et al.*, 1979; King, 1974). Nonetheless, these results tend to suggest that students would have benefited from more systematic induction to new study demands, helping them to develop an independent approach to organising their work at college.

In looking overall at students' perspectives on transition to college, the findings suggest that there was considerable scope for more attention by the colleges to this aspect of

pastoral provision. Student views here showed a contrast with those of staff (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29) About 85% of staff reported their colleges' guidance on transition to college as at least fairly adequate.

6.4.2 Guidance on personal matters, course work and careers/future education

Criticism about the inadequacy of pastoral care in institutions run under FE regulations were expressed by opponents of tertiary colleges (see Chapter 1). On the other hand, principals and senior staff argued that pastoral provision was an important priority for the colleges. Evidence discussed in Section 6.2 above suggested that students welcomed the more adult atmosphere of college, and did not miss the pastoral aspects of school, including defined pastoral structures and continuity of staff-student relationships, which defenders of the school sixth form argued were a major advantage of sixth form provision for the 16-19 age group. It therefore might be expected that students would express broad satisfaction with pastoral provision in their colleges, echoing the views of staff (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29).

Three main areas of pastoral care were examined: guidance on personal matters, work and progress, and careers/future education advice. Students were asked to indicate how much information and advice they had received on each of the three areas by selecting one of four response categories, ranging from 'a great deal' to 'none at all'. Results are shown in Table 6.10. While relatively high levels of guidance provision were reported for course work and progress, the rather lower proportion for career guidance may arise because some students were at an early stage of their course, term 2 of a 6 term course for example. As regards personal guidance, such as that provided by a tutor in day-to-day contact with students, this is perhaps less tangible and evident to students than the other two areas of pastoral provision. Hence respondents might well not have seen this as an area in which they had received significant amounts of advice (unless they had

sought help from staff about particular problems). Personal guidance, for most students without major personal difficulties or crises, may be a fairly subtle process, stemming from general interaction and working relationships with a tutor and other members of staff (see e.g. Best *et al.*, 1995). Therefore, a better indicator of the effectiveness of personal guidance provision might be the extent to which students feel they are known by staff. Respondents were asked 'Do you feel that you are known personally by at least one member of staff?', with 79% of respondents giving a positive answer to this question.

	Percentages		
	a great deal/fair amount	not very much/ none at all	N=
Personal welfare	34.9	65.1	1013
Course work and progress	78.3	21.7	1017
Future career/education	54.1	45.9	1012

Table 6.10: Amount of guidance received

The amount of guidance received is however a subjective matter and individuals are likely to use differing criteria and reference points for assessing it. Information on the extent of guidance also provides no indication on what levels of guidance are seen as desirable or appropriate, e.g. students may perceive low levels of personal guidance as adequate to meet their needs. Respondents were therefore asked how much information and advice they would like to receive on each of the three areas (see Table 6.11).

	Percentages			
	much/a little less	neither more nor less	a little/much more	N=
Personal welfare	7.3	62.7	30.0	996
Course work and progress	3.6	50.5	46.0	10004
Future career/education	1.8	35.9	63.2	1006

Table 6.11: Desired amounts of guidance

These figures would seem to indicate a considerable disparity between the level of guidance provision in each of the three categories and students' preferred levels, and particularly marked difference in the cases of course work and progress and careers/education guidance. A study of student views in one of the surveyed colleges also found a considerable demand for more advice and information particularly on employment opportunities (Cotterell, 1980).

As with the question of transition to college, the area of guidance provision may be one where demand is never fully satisfied. Students' wishes for greater levels of careers guidance, in particular, may reflect concerns and anxieties about their chances of gaining suitable employment after leaving college. At the time of the study, greater proportions of young people were staying on in full time or part time 16-19 education and training, partly as a result of growing unemployment among the age group, particularly the unskilled (see Chapter 1.1). Student views on the relative merits of college and employment discussed in relation to research question (d) above reflected some ambivalence, and many may have preferred to be in employment if this option had been open to them. Over 20% of the sample agreed with the statement 'I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job' (see Appendix 6, Table 6f, item 15).

Those students who had indicated a need for a little or much more guidance in any of the three areas were asked to write in what kinds of additional advice and information would be helpful. Responses (see Appendix 6, Table 6m) reflected concerns relating in particular to careers, future education, and work and progress in college. The most frequently mentioned area was guidance on careers in general, including local job opportunities, help in completing job applications, organized visits to local employers, and talks by employers in order to get a 'feel' of what was involved in particular occupations.

The second major area where more guidance was sought was that of individual work and progress in the courses studied by respondents. They mentioned such factors as more frequent/more rapid feedback on essays, projects and other aspects of course work, so that they would have a clearer and more regular appraisal of their progress during the year. Other possibilities mentioned included more frequent reports (e.g. termly or half-termly) and information on the likelihood of passing exams, help with revision techniques and so on.

The third main area of concern overlaps with the second and first ones, in suggesting *how* such increased feedback and advice could be achieved. Here respondents emphasized the need for more individual student contact with teaching, tutoring and careers staff, to enable more detailed assessment of each student's progress in college and/or possible career options.

Looking overall at students' perspectives in relation to research question (f), it would seem that they did not, on the whole, share the 'official' view of pastoral care in the colleges. Principals and senior staff and college documents emphasized that student guidance was an important aspect of their educational provision for the 16-19 age group. This aim was endorsed in responses of the staff sample - over 80% of staff viewed their own college's guidance provision for students as very/fairly adequate in each of the three

areas examined and in transition to college (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29). Student perspectives, however, indicated a considerable demand for more guidance in all areas, especially careers/future education and college work. These findings illustrate the extent to which different groups within an organization may attribute very different meanings to organizational processes (Fullan, 1991). While principals and staff perceived that the aim of providing appropriate care was being achieved to a considerable extent, students from a different perspective, based on an interpretation of their own current and future needs and the external context of the employment market, saw guidance provision in a less favourable light.

As Rudduck *et al.* (1996) suggest, students' needs and expectations tend to be inferred by schools and colleges rather than investigated. The authors go on to argue that taking account of student perspectives can and should play an important and indeed essential role in institutional improvement, since unless organizational goals and purposes are communicated to and negotiated with students, attempts at improving teaching and learning are unlikely to be successful. Similarly, a study of student perspectives on pastoral provision (Lang, 1985) found a considerable mismatch between the interpretations of students and staff. Students' understanding of their pastoral needs were shaped by a complex range of factors including their life outside school as well as within it. Staff on the other hand tended to have oversimplified and stereotyped views about student needs. In general, the findings on student perspectives reported here relating to pastoral provision in the study suggest a considerable mismatch between students' felt need ans their normative needs as defined by the colleges.

6.5 Research question (g): Inter-group differences in student attitudes

So far, this chapter has been concerned largely with the overall views of students rather than those of subgroups, since the purpose of the study was to gain an overview of

perspectives on the tertiary colleges' provision. However as discussed in Chapter 5, various subgroups of staff held differing views about their colleges. The same is likely to be true of students. A number of studies have shown that educational institutions have differing impacts on different groups of students (see e.g. Nuttall *et al.*, 1989). Thus for example the attainments and attitudes of various ethnic groups within the same school may be very different (see Smith and Tomlinson, 1989). Gender-linked and age-related differences have also been found in students' attitudes to education (see Keys and Fernandes, 1993; Igoe and Sullivan, 1991). As compared with schools, the tertiary colleges were relatively heterogeneous organizations, incorporating a range of very different student groups like other FE sector institutions (see e.g. Tipton, 1973; Theodossin, 1984) so the perspectives of various subgroups might be expected to differ.

It was therefore important to compare the views of different groups of students, to see whether the overview of student perspectives presented above reflected the attitudes of the various student constituencies within the colleges or whether it masked significant differences between, for example, those following different course programmes or those in larger and smaller colleges. As constraints of space do not permit detailed discussion of intergroup perspectives on all the issues discussed above, the analysis here focuses on student responses to the set of attitude statements (see Table 6.4), since this provided a broad summary indicator of students' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their life and work and the general college atmosphere.

Eight sets of student subgroups were compared for differences. These groups were:

(1) those in larger and smaller colleges

(2) males and females

(3) first year and second/third year student

(4) A level students and those following other courses

(5) those planning to continue FE/HE and to enter work

(6) those transferring from independent schools and students educated in the maintained sector

(7) those of higher and lower prior attainment

(8) students in each of the 11 surveyed colleges.

Results are discussed below.

6.5.1 College size

The staff survey showed that staff in the larger colleges (nos. 4, 5 and 6) were significantly less likely to express positive views on some aspects of their colleges, particularly organization structures (see Chapter 5, Table 5.11). It might be hypothesized that larger colleges might be seen by student as being impersonal and unfriendly, with less close relationships between students and between students and staff than smaller colleges, which might be expected to have a more intimate community atmosphere. Similar concerns were expressed about large comprehensive schools (see O' Connor, 1977), though as Benn and Chitty (1996) point out, these concerns were often based on ideological resistance rather than research evidence. The attitude items for which there were significant differences in full-time student attitudes between larger (Group 6 and above) and smaller (Group 5 and below) colleges are shown in Table 6.12.

As Table 6.12 shows, on all these items, except number 15, a lower proportion of students in larger colleges expressed positive views. However, it should be noted that

the percentage differences are not very large. Also there were only significant differences on these 5 of the 20 items. The lower proportion in larger colleges agreeing that they would leave if a job were available may be accounted for by the fact that 2 of the 3 larger colleges were located in relatively affluent areas where staying on rates in education were relatively high, and youth unemployment less of a problem than in some other areas.

However, the evidence in Table 6.12 indicates some support for the above hypothesis that larger colleges may have had some particular problems as a result of their size. Students in large colleges were more likely to see their college as impersonal and unfriendly, and less likely to have made a lot of friends. In their comments on good and bad aspects of college discussed in Section 6.2.3 above, a number of students noted the problems arising from the large size of their colleges, though many emphasized that they preferred college to school despite the problem of size, e.g.

> *'I prefer college ... though because of the large size of the college there is an impersonal atmosphere. [but] it is not unfriendly ...'* (College 4).

> *'I enjoy it, but the college is too large, and therefore one can never really settle down. I do feel that mixed classes (i.e. arts and science) would help this process ...'* (College 4 student, studying 3 science A levels and 0 level French).

	% agree			
	College size		N =	chi square signif. %age
	smaller	*larger*		*p=<*
a) General atmosphere & ethos				
3) College is impersonal and unfriendly	8.1	13.9	991	1.0
c) Social relations with students				
8) I've made a lot of friends since I came to college	91.5	82.9	1001	0.1
e) College work: general views				
15) I'd leave college tomorrow if I could get a job	25.3	15.6	913	0.5
f) Extent of help and supervision from staff				
17) Students not made to work hard enough	18.9	34.0	967	0.01
g) Exam pressure				
20) College only interested in students passing exams	28.2	36.1	909	5.0

Table 6.12: Student attitudes by college size

While larger colleges could offer economies of scale and a wider curricular and extra-curricular range of activities, they may, however, have had greater difficulties in fostering a sense of community among students and students, and staff, and in demonstrating that the needs of the individual were important to the college.

6.5.2 Gender differences in student attitudes

Earlier studies had found significant differences between girls' and boys' views of post compulsory education. Thus, King (1976) notes that:

> *'... it may be tentatively concluded that overall, girls have a more satisfactory experience of schools than do boys, but a less satisfactory experience of technical colleges. Whilst there are no overall differences in the satisfaction of boys in schools compared with those in colleges, girls have a more satisfactory experience of schools than colleges'* (p. 183).

In the tertiary college that King studied, boys were almost twice as likely as girls to feel that there were unnecessary restrictions. However, the gender difference was narrowed as regards relations with staff and was not significant with respect to ease of making friends and a sense of belonging at college. It would therefore seem that, at least for some aspects of college life, gender differences in opinions may have been less pronounced in the tertiary college studied by King than in schools and further education colleges.

In the current study, the following items showed statistically significant differences between male and female views:

(3) college is impersonal and unfriendly.

(5) too many rules and regulations.

(7) college gives students too much freedom.

(14) college life is good preparation for work/future education.

(20) college only interested in students passing exams.

These gender differences are shown in Table 6.13.

	% age disagree			
Item no.	Boys	Girls	N =	chi square signif. % age p=<
a) General atmosphere and ethos				
3. College impersonal, unfriendly	87.8	93.6	980	0.5
b) Extent to which students treated as adults				
5. Too many rules and regulations	81.6	89.7	952	0.1
7. College gives students too much freedom	87.9	92.2	958	5.0
c) College work: general views				
*14. College life good preparation for work/HE	83.4	89.5	943	1.0
d) Exam pressure				
20. College only interested in students passing exams	63.5	74.2	902	0.1

Table 6.13: Student attitudes by gender

** %age agree*

On all these items girls showed a significantly more positive view of their colleges than did boys. It should be noted, however, that there were no significant gender differences on the other 15 items, and on the 5 noted above the disparity is not very great. On the basis of this evidence, it can therefore be suggested that while girls showed a marginal tendency towards greater satisfaction with some aspects of college life, there were no major disparities as regards general attitudes towards college, tending to support the suggestions made by King (1997) about the lack of pronounced gender differences in attitudes in tertiary colleges, as compared with other types of 16-19 institution.

6.5.3 First year students

Perhaps not surprisingly, first year students' views were significantly different from those of second and third years with respect to a number of aspects of college life. These are shown in Table 6.14.

Although all first year respondents had been at college for at least one term, and some for nearly three terms, their less positive views on items included under (d) and (f) probably arose, at least in part, because they had had less time to develop close working relationships with staff than students in their second and third years. However, it is interesting to note that there were no differences between the two groups as regards items relating to general atmosphere and ethos, ease of settling down and making friends, indicating that the majority of first years were not encountering great problems in adapting to college life.

The more negative views of first years on college versus a job were particularly marked, and to a lesser degree were evident in responses to the statement 'if I had the choice again, I wouldn't come to college'. These differences probably reflected differing levels of motivation and commitment with respect to work at college between the two groups. For some first years, especially those who had failed to find a job, college was likely to

be very much a second choice, while second year students had invested a considerably greater amount of time and effort in their courses and hence tended to express a greater degree of commitment. This difference and the approach of end of course exams for second/third year students, and their increased awareness of the need to work hard to pass these exams, may account for the fact that a greater proportion of second/third years agreed that students are not made to work hard enough.

	% agree			
	1st year	2nd/3rd year	N =	chi square signif. %age p=<
d) Relationships with staff				
11) I feel I know some staff well	72.7	80.0	943	5.0
e) College work: general views				
14) College is good preparation for HE/work	88.8	83.8	951	5.0
15) I'd leave tomorrow if I could get a job	33.2	10.5	912	0.01
16) If I had the choice again I wouldn't come to college	16.8	10.9	950	5.0
f) Extent of supervision and help from staff				
17) Not made to work hard enough	18.8	28.1	966	0.1
18) Plenty of individual help from staff	63.7	70.4	934	5.0

Table 6.14: Student attitudes by year group

6.5.4 A level students

At the time of the study there was considerable concern about the tertiary colleges' provision for A level students. It was suggested by some of the school teacher unions and by other defenders of the sixth form, that A level student needs would not be effectively met in large multi-purpose colleges, that the FE sector generally lacked a tradition and culture of excellence in A level performance, and that students would not be made to work as hard as they would in the sixth form environment where there was a clear focus on, and established record in, A level success (see e.g. NAS/UWT, 1977). As with many of the claims made for and against the tertiary colleges, these suggestions stemmed from ideological beliefs rather than evidence (Benn and Chitty, 1996). At the same time, comments from lecturing staff indicated that they felt considerable pressures from external sources to show that provision for A level students was equal to that of other providers and pre-existing schools (see Chapter 5.1.2).

It was therefore important to examine the perspectives of A level students themselves, as compared with other tertiary college students, to see if they felt that their needs were being met. The study therefore looked at their views to assess whether there were significant differences between this group and others with regard to attitudes towards college. Items for which differences were found are shown in Table 6.15.

	%age agree			
	A level	non-A level	N =	chi square signif. %age p=<
a) College atmosphere				
4) College offers plenty of opportunities	81.5	74.7	932	5.0
b) Adult treatment				
5) Too many rules and regulations	6.8	18.7	961	.01
e) College work: general views				
13) I shall be sorry to leave	56.2	47.9	865	5.0
15) I'd leave if I could get a job	6.9	32.1	913	.01
16) If I had the choice again I wouldn't come to college	6.8	18.5	951	.01
f) Extent of help from staff				
17) Not made to work hard enough	30.7	18.4	967	.01
18) Plenty of individual help from staff	71.5	64.1	936	5.0

Table 6.15: Student attitudes: A level and non-A level groups

As with the second and third year students discussed above, (a group with which they overlap), A level students displayed a more committed and motivated attitude towards college than other groups, with higher proportions agreeing that they would be sorry to leave, that the college offers plenty of opportunities and that staff provide individual help. They may also have tended to be more conformist and willing to accept the colleges' rules and regulations (see item 5). A higher proportion of this group felt that

they were not made to work hard enough, again suggesting high levels of commitment towards their studies.

As discussed above, A level pass rates were a matter of considerable importance as far as the colleges' public image was concerned. One might therefore expect that A level students would be more aware of exam pressure than those on other types of course. However, there were no significant differences between A level students and other groups with respect to the statement that 'college is only interested in students passing exams' (28.5% and 32.6% agreement, respectively). Overall, the rather more positive views of A level students as compared with others, tends to support the view expressed by some staff that the colleges were giving considerable attention to the needs of this group.

6.5.5 Student destinations and attitude differences

The study also examined the views of the subgroup of students intending to move on to further/higher education after their present course and that group intending to enter work (with or without training). Significant differences between the two groups are shown in Table 6.16.

	% agree intended destination		N=	chi square signif. %age p = <
	FE/HE	*work*		
c) Social relations with students				
8) I've made a lot of friends	86.9	92.2	881	5.0
e) College work: general views				
12) On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	90.9	86.3	866	5.0
13) I shall be sorry to leave	58.0	44.6	764	0.1
15) I'd leave tomorrow if I could get a job	8.0	35.2	803	.01
16) If I had the choice again I wouldn't come to college	6.3	19.9	839	.01
f) Extent of supervision and help from staff				
17) Not made to work hard enough	27.0	19.0	855	1.0
18) Get plenty of individual help from staff	71.0	63.2	827	5.0
19) Expected to work by themselves too much before able to	25.2	34.1	844	1.0

Table 6.16: Student attitudes by intended destination

Students aiming at FE/HE showed a pattern of differences similar to that of the A level group discussed above. As expected, differences were particularly large between the

FE/HE and work groups on items 15 and 16. Like A level students, the former groups showed a higher proportion of agreement with regard to not being made to work hard enough and getting plenty of individual help from staff. As might be expected, the answers to item 19 indicate that those aiming at HE/FE were more able to adjust to patterns of independent study and organising their own work that those planning to enter employment.

6.5.6 Students transferring from independent schools

Students who had transferred from independenortion in colleges in the South West and South, (where a higher percentage of the population used the private school sector). Since this group (and/or their parents) had exercised choice in leaving the independent sector - despite the greater prestige and success rate of its sixth form provision - their views on college were examined vis à vis those of students who had stayed within the state sector to see if there were significant differences between the two groups. Since ex-independent school students had moved from a context where students' work patterns and behaviour were tightly controlled, it might be expected that they would find the relative absence of firm controls in college harder to adjust to than students remaining within the maintained sector.

Results showed that on all attitude items except number 20, there were no significant differences between students from the private and public sectors. On item 20, a lower proportion of ex-independent school students agreed that 'the college is only interested in students passing exams', as one might expect, given the independent sector's emphasis on exam performance. Overall these results would seem to indicate that students from private schools had found it relatively easy to settle down in the very different atmosphere of the college, and reflected the generally positive views of other students about life and work at ct schools comprised 6.5% of the overall sample, but a higher propollege.

6.5.7 Attainment levels and courses

Tertiary colleges provided a very wide range of courses for the entire attainment range of students staying on in full time education (as well as part time students, of course), from potential Oxbridge entrants to those of very low attainment. It was therefore regarded as important to assess the extent to which students of various attainment levels and on various types of courses were satisfied with the colleges' provision.

O level and CSE passes were used as a broad indicator of attainment level. Respondents were asked to list their school O/CSE exam results and grades. These were then coded according to the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) index for O level and CSE scores. This was used by the authority for assessing levels of attainment among its pupils (Mortimore *et al,* 1982). The index scored as follows for each O level and CSE pass to form an overall score.

O level grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	
CSE grade			1	2	3	4	5
Score	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Scores were then divided into 2 groups - 0-20, and 21 and above, representing students of lower and higher attainment. (A score of 20 on the scale represents 4 Grade C O levels or Grade 1 CSEs, or equivalent - e.g. 5 D grades or CSE grade 2 exam passes.)

There were no significant differences in perspective between the two groups on 15 of the attitude items. Items for which there were significant differences are shown in Table 6.17.

Item	% agree lower attainment	higher attainment	N=	chi square signif. % age p=<
b) Extent to which students are treated as adults				
5) There are too many rules and regulations	22.3	11.4	939	0.1
d) Relationships with staff				
10) The staff are not interested in the students as people	24.2	13.4	917	0.1
College work				
e) General views				
15) I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job	36.4	18.7	813	0.01
16) If I had the choice again I wouldn't come to college	22.0	11.8	925	0.1
f) Extent of supervision and help from staff				
17) Students are not made to work hard enough	17.1	24.5	943	5.0

Table 6.17: Student attitudes by attainment level

These results suggest that students of lower attainment were more likely to express less positive views about college than higher attaining students. It should be noticed, though, that this seems to apply only to negatively worded items; there were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the positively worded items. Item 17 was

the only one where higher attaining students expressed more critical views than those of lower attainment. This may have occurred because, as with other overlapping groups discussed above (A level, and second/third year students), higher attaining students have greater aspirations with respect to success and exam achievement at college, and hence are more likely to accept encouragement from the college to work hard.

The perspectives of students on various types of courses were analysed in a similar way. The views of students in each of these course groups are shown in Table 6.18. Differences of perspective highlighted by this analysis showed complex variations on a number of items between those on the various types of course. Eleven items showed significant differences between the course groups.

There were no significant differences between the various course groups on items relating to the general atmosphere and ethos of the colleges. On the question of adult treatment, low proportions of GCE students (i.e. those following A level, O level or A and O level courses) felt that there were too many rules and regulations, while higher proportions of students on vocational courses agreed with this item. Secretarial students, however, reflected views closer to GCE students than to those on other vocational courses. The patterns of response by secretarial students are interesting, in that on most items they showed response rates closer to those of GCE students than to the other vocational groups, and they were more likely than other groups to express satisfaction in their attitudes towards college on both positively and negatively worded items. The other vocational groups in general showed less positive views about college than GCE groups, especially on items relating to college work and adult treatment. O level students in general showed percentage responses similar to those of other GCE groups on most aspects of college life. However, they, and students following 'mixed' courses, were more likely than other GCE groups to agree that 'I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job', suggesting that, like vocational course students, their participation in

Item	Type of course % age agree									
	A level only	*O level only*	*A & O levels*	*'Mixed' GCE + Voc.*	*BEC Gen/Nat.*	*TEC*	*C & G*	*Secret. / others*	N =	*chi square signif. %age p = <*
b) Extent to which students are treated as adults										
5) There are too many rules and regulations	7.2	6.4	7.5	12.2	22.1	29.1	23.4	9.1	960	0.01
c) Social relationships with students										
8). Have made a lot of friends since I came to college	90.9	87.8	90.8	80.0	91.9	81.2	94.1	95.7	1000	0.5
d) Relationships with staff										
11). I feel I know some staff well	78.2	75.5	74.7	67.9	67.7	72.7	87.7	89.1	943	0.5
<u>College work</u>										
e) General views										
12). On the whole I enjoy my work at college	85.3	88.8	92.9	91.5	84.0	80.0	93.1	93.5	984	2.5
13). I shall be sorry to leave college	53.7	53.3	60.3	40.3	42.7	41.5	61.4	59.0	865	1.0

(cont)

Item	Type of course % age agree									
	A level only	*O level only*	*A & O levels*	*'Mixed' GCE + Voc.*	*BEC Gen/Nat.*	*TEC*	*C & G*	*Secret. / others*	N =	*chi square signif. %age p = <*
15) I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job	4.1	23.3	12.2	32.5	39.4	37.7	25.0	19.0	912	0.01
16) If I had the choice again I wouldn't come to college	7.7	16.2	6.1	12.3	23.4	12.3	20.8	15.2	950	0.1
f) Extent of supervision and help from staff										
17) Students are not made to work hard enough	30.0	26.4	35.7	22.6	16.1	13.8	17.0	13.0	966	0.1
18) Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	73.8	63.2	63.6	57.5	59.3	72.1	68.1	75.6	934	5.0
19) Students are expected to work too much by themselves before able to	26.2	28.4	34.2	37.8	31.9	36.6	30.2	8.7	953	2.5
g) Exam pressure										
20) College only interested in students passing exams	31.3	36.9	30.5	18.2	27.6	43.4	29.5	17.9	908	1.0

Table 6.18: Student attitudes by course followed

full time education was considerably influenced by the lack of job opportunities for young people. GCE students were more likely to agree that 'students are not made to work hard enough', indicating perhaps a greater awareness of the need to work hard to achieve success in their courses and also some uneasiness about their use of private study time, which GCE students had a much greater amount of. Indeed many vocational course syllabuses allowed very little or no time for private study. On the other hand, both GCE and vocational groups showed relatively high proportions agreeing that 'the college is only interested in students passing exams'; the only groups with less than 25% agreeing on this item were 'mixed' course and secretarial students.

These results would seem to suggest that students on GCE courses (with the exception, of those doing retake O level courses on some items) were relatively well satisfied with most aspects of their life and work in college, and broadly shared its norms and values. Some critics of the tertiary colleges argued that since most of them were based on ex-FE colleges they would tend to have 'associationist' rather than the 'community' cultures found in school sixth forms (King, 1976) (see e.g. NAS/UWT, 1977), and hence would tend to be less suitable for more 'academic' students. These fears would seem, on the basis of the current evidence, to have been unfounded. Indeed the reverse is indicated - i.e. students on vocational and mixed GCE/vocational courses expressed relatively lower degrees of satisfaction with various aspect of college life. It may be that tertiary colleges, despite their origins, had developed some aspects of the 'community' climate typical of schools (see Grigg's (1981) discussion of this in one tertiary college). Of course it may be argued that GCE students, in any type of institution tended to be more conformist and hence more inclined to be more satisfied with the school or college in which they continue their education after 16. However, the results of the Dean *et al.* (1979) study suggested that this is not the case - two thirds of their survey sample expressed a preference for college rather than schools.

The differing perceptions of students of different attainment levels and following various types of courses, like the other subgroup differences discussed above, had considerable implications for the colleges' curricular and extra-curricular provision and for the hidden curriculum. These results suggest that the colleges were meeting the perceived needs of different subgroups of students to differing degrees, despite the colleges' declared intention to provide parity of treatment for the full range of the 16-19 age group.

6.5.8 Inter college differences

Analysis of staff views showed significant differences in levels of satisfaction among staff in the various colleges. It might therefore be expected that these would be reflected also in student views. Large scale surveys spanning a number of institutions of the same type may mask considerable differences between individual institutions. King (1976) calls this the 'aggregative fallacy' and suggests:

> *'This kind of analysis ignores the possibility of variation between organisations of the same type, a possibility posed by those who run [them] when they express their belief in the individuality of their institutions ... total numbers and percentages across all the organisations do not represent the social units in which the question was posed and to which the answers referred'* (p. 180).

Tables 6.19 and 6.20 show the rank order of colleges with respect to percentage agreement on positive items and percentage disagreement on negative items of the attitude statements. With the exception of items 7, 9, 11 and 16, there were statistically significant differences between colleges on all items. These differences were quite large - a range of over 25% on five items and over 30% on a further four items. Indeed, these differences are in most cases rather larger than those between the various subgroups of students discussed above. Colleges 1, 9, 10 (and particularly the first of these) tended to

Attitude	*College Number*														
Item No.	*Highest*									*Lowest*				*range**	*chi square signif. %age p = <*
1	9	(99.0%)	8	10	1 / 6	7	3	4	11	5	2		(72.3%)	26.7	0.01
2	10	(93.7%)	9	6	11	5	3	4	8	2	7	1	(76.2%)	17.5	5.0
4	1	(90.0%)	10	9	6	7	4	11	5	8	3	2	(54.8%)	35.2	0.01
6	1	(91.7%)	11	3	6	7	10	4 / 5	9	8	2		(62.9%)	28.8	0.01
8	9	(97.1%)	7	10	1	3	11 / 8	5	6	4	2		(79.2%)	17.9	0.1
11	1	(86.1%)	3	5	9	11	10	6	7	2	8	4	(64.0%)	22.1	NS
12	5	(95.1%)	9	1	7	10	6	8	2	11	3	4	(79.4%)	15.7	2.5
13	1	(64.9%)	6	5	9	10	3	11	4 / 7	2	8		(31.0%)	33.9	0.5
14	1	(97.2%)	10	7	9	4	8	3	11	6	5	2	(77.6%)	19.6	5.0
18	1	(80.2%)	10	6	8	11	5	7	3	9	4	2	(49.2%)	31.0	0.01

Table 6.19: Student attitudes by college: positive items - % age agreement in rank order

* i. e. inter-college range between highest and lowest % ages

Attitude	*College Number*														
Item No.	*Highest*									*Lowest*				*range**	*chi square signif.*
															%age
															p = <
3	9	(98.1)	10	3	11	7	8	1	5 / 6	4	2		(78.6)	19.5	0.1
5	1	(94.1)	9	11	3	6	4	5	8	10	7	2	(67.6)	26.5	0.01
7	1/9	(94.1)	2	10	5	11	8	3	6	4	7		(83.3)	10.8	NS
9	9	(91.3)	3	1	8	10	4	5	11	6	7	2	(79.7)	11.6	NS
10	1	(92.7)	6	11	10	3	7	9	8	5	4	2	(69.2)	23.5	0.5
15	9	(89.0)	6	4	5	1	3	10	11	8	2	7	(64.9)	24.1	0.01
16	8	(90.1)	1	4 / 9	6	5	10	11	7	3	2		(79.4)	10.7	NS
17	10	(87.1)	8	1	11	3	9	2	7	6	5	4	(53.3)	33.8	0.01
19	10	(83.9)	11	3	9	5	6	1	2	4	7	8	(58.2)	25.7	0.1
20	11	(79.8)	1	2	7	4	9	10	6	3	8	5	(54.2)	25.6	1.0

Table 6.20: Student attitudes by college: negative items - percentage disagreement in rank order

* i.e. inter-college range between hightest and lowest % ages

show high levels of student satisfaction on both positive and negative items; conversely, Colleges 4 and 2, especially the latter, tended to show rather lower levels of student satisfaction.

These results suggest that factors to do with the individual ethos and culture of the colleges and the way that they were run had a significant impact on student attitudes and the extent to which they shared the tertiary ethos propounded by senior staff. Exploring the reasons for these differences and the college variables that may have accounted for them was beyond the scope of this study. Its purpose was to give a broad picture of a new type of institution by examining a relatively large sample group of institutions of that type. As King (1976) points out, it is a weakness of all such large scale surveys that they do not permit explorations of the fine detail of organizational life and the factors within an organization that contribute to its dominant culture and values. For this, it is necessary to focus on a much smaller sample of institutions (given limited research time and resources) and to examine organizational processes and social relationships in depth and over time, in the way that was achieved, for example, by Nias *et al.* (1992) in their study of the culture of primary schools. On the other hand, such studies are subject to the criticisms that the institutions portrayed may be atypical, and the findings affected by the long term involvement of the researcher (Johnson, 1994). Ideally, to get a full picture of particular types of organization, both large scale and in-depth research should be undertaken (see Bryman, 1992), 'looking from both ends of the telescope'. Given resource constraints, however, this rarely happens.

Nonetheless some very tentative suggestions might be put forward in interpreting these results, and in particular the tendency towards very wide differences in levels of satisfaction between students in Colleges 1, 9 and 10 on the one hand and Colleges 2 and 4 on the other. Three main factors can be suggested. First it may be that the role of the principal was an important influence. As discussed in Chapter 2.4, organizational leaders have a major impact on organizational culture and the extent to which goals are

shared and actively pursued by members (Beare *et al.*, 1989). Thus some principals may have been more successful than others in establishing, and gaining staff and student commitment to, organizational purposes. Second, as noted in Chapter 5, it is likely that the 'organisational saga' (Clark, 1983) of each college also had an effect on members' attitudes. Thus, for example, College 9 was not established on the basis of a pre-existing technical college. It opened as a tertiary college in a new building on one site, and hence may have had fewer problems than other colleges in integrating staff, students and areas of work. Although it might be argued that this factor was likely to affect *staff* attitudes and cultures, rather than those of *students*, it is suggested by Hargreaves (1995) that the dominant organizational culture among staff is likely to 'trickle down' and impact on student attitudes. In contrast to College 9's relatively favourable circumstances, College 4 had been subject to two large-scale reorganizations in the ten years prior to the study. It had been reorganized to form part of a sixth form college system, and later merged with a FE college to become a tertiary college. The disruption caused by these extensive organizational changes may have had some continuing influence on organizational culture, which in turn may have influenced student attitudes.

A third and final factor which may help to account for the wide inter-college differences in student perspectives relates to the nature of the student population of each college. Those colleges located in urban areas may have lost some potential students to 11-18 schools. Thus, for example, College 2 was 'tertiary' only in part of its catchment area. The other part of its catchment was also served by a long-established and popular 11-18 school, which may have 'creamed off' some more academic and highly motivated students (see Benn and Chitty, 1996, for a discussion of the 'creaming off' issue). Thus it may be that the intake of College 2 was less balanced than those of most other colleges, and hence (though this is highly speculative) may have included a higher proportion of students with less positive attitudes towards education. College 4, which had several 11-18 schools within travelling distance, may also have suffered from this problem. The

factors which may account for the inter-college differences are discussed further in Chapter 8, in the context of a consideration of the overall findings of the study.

6.6 Summary

Looking at the overall results of the full-time student survey, a number of broad conclusions can be reached about the four research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter, and about the appropriateness of formal and rational system perspectives for analysing organizations. As noted in Chapter 2.8, and evidenced in the findings of the staff survey (Chapter 5), such perspectives may be an inadequate framework for exploring the attitudes and views of organizational members. With respect to research question (d), the findings suggest that the colleges' goal of providing an individual programme of studies suited to the needs of each student was being achieved for the large majority of the sample. Students also in general shared the official view of the ethos of the colleges, expressing relatively high levels of satisfaction with the general atmosphere of their colleges and the way that students were treated. On the basis of student perspectives, it would seem that the colleges had succeeded in developing an appropriate ethos to meet the perceived needs of the 16-19 age group.

However, students did not share the official view of the merits of a broad and balanced curriculum. Like students in other surveys (Dean *et al.*, 1979; Higham *et al.*, 1996), they expressed a strongly instrumental attitude towards their work, preferring to focus on the examined elements of their course programmes. Students' lack of enthusiasm for a broad curriculum is not confined to tertiary colleges, and it a continuing and pressing issue in 16-19 provision generally (Higham *et al.*, 1996), particularly in the light of the Dearing Report's (DFEE, 1996) proposals for a greater emphasis on core skills.

The analysis of students' study programmes in relation to question (d) was also concerned with the extent to which they were taking mixed economy courses. These

have been described as 'a defining feature' of the tertiary colleges' provision (Barrow, 1990), and can be seen as an element of the extended version of comprehensiveness (see Chapter 4.3). However there was little evidence that many students were studying a mix of academic and vocational subjects, except to a limited degree in some colleges. As the principals pointed out, external constraints, particularly HE and employer requirements, acted as a barrier to the development of this area of the curriculum. This provides an example of the extent to which organizational goals may be shaped by external influences (see Patterson *et al.*, 1986, in Chapter 2.5 above), contrary to the assumptions of rational system models.

Question (e) was concerned with how far the integrationist objectives of the colleges were being met, using the attitudes of students as an indicator. Principals and other senior staff described the colleges as relatively cohesive communities (see Chapter 4.2) and saw student extra-curricular activities as a vehicle for promoting social integration and parity of esteem among students following difference curricular routes. However the student survey showed limited participation in extra curricular activities and the students' union. On the other hand, over half the sample reported at least a fair amount of opportunity to meet students on other courses and over a quarter would have welcomes more opportunities for doing so. Generally, though, students showed little evidence of sharing the social integration goals expressed by principals, or of enacting them by participating in the extra-curricular aspects of college life. This may suggest differing interpretations of organizational events by different members (see Greenfield, 1973, in Chapter 2.2). Thus, for principals, the non-curricular areas of provision for students represented an important component in the distinctiveness of the tertiary colleges and a vehicle for promoting the comprehensive principle of social integration. Students, on the other hand, may have seen extra curricular activities merely as optional additions, which most chose not to participate in.

Findings on question (f) relating to pastoral provision provided a more striking example of a mismatch in perceptions between different organizational members. Despite the careful attention that had been given to this area of provision (see Chapter 4.3), and although the large majority of staff viewed pastoral care as satisfactory, students expressed a considerable demand for more guidance. There was thus a substantial mismatch between what Bradshaw (1972) defines as the normative and felt needs of students (see Chapter 2.8). These findings point to the need to draw on alternatives to formal and rational system models to gain a full picture of organizations. The official view does not provide an accurate picture of the perspectives and interpretations of organizational members.

Question (g) was concerned with whether there were differences of perspective between different subgroups of students. Notwithstanding the generally positive views of students shown by the survey, there were quite considerable disparities among the subgroups examined, in their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of college life. Broadly speaking, non A level students, males, first year students, those of lower attainment, those following vocational courses, and those in larger colleges, tended to have less favourable attitudes towards their colleges with respect to some aspects of college life - particularly their work and adult treatment. These differences highlight the unintended, and often unrecognized, differential impact that organizations may have on various client groups. It was not the colleges' intention that different subgroups of students should have differing levels of satisfaction with college life. Indeed, it was their explicit intention to develop a curriculum and ethos to meet the needs of *all* 16-19 year olds and to provide parity of treatment for all groups. There were also quite substantial difference in student views between individual colleges. It would seem that factors relating to each organization's particular culture and ethos, its 'organisational saga' and the leadership style of the principal, had an impact on student attitudes, and the extent to which they shared the official view of the tertiary ethos. The findings in relation to research question (g) suggest that organizational goals impact on different member

groups to differing degrees, and that organizations of the same type, sharing similar goals, may meet their clients' perceived needs to widely varying levels. These issues tend to be ignored by rational system and formal models.

In general, full time student perspectives suggest that a number of the main purposes of the tertiary colleges were being achieved. There were, however, various mismatches between the official view and student perspectives, and wide differences in the attitudes of student subgroups towards their colleges. Chapter 7 explores the perspectives of part time students, to see how far they shared the official view and whether their attitudes were similar to those of the full-time group.

Chapter 7 Part-time student perspectives

7.1 Introduction

Part-time student views on their colleges can be expected to be rather different from those of full-time students, for a number of reasons. Most part-time students attend college for only one day, or less, a week. The experience of college is thus a much less important aspect of their lives than it is for full-time students. Many part-time students attend college on a day/evening release basis as part of their conditions of employment to take part in a job-related training course. They are 'sent on a course at college', rather than attending voluntarily like full-time students, so many of the issues explored in Chapter 6, such as mixed economy courses, are not relevant to them. Similarly, their major focus of concern is the workplace rather than the college, so the social and extra-curricular aspects of college life are likely to be less important to them than to full-time students.

Nonetheless, it was felt important to look at part-time student views, because they formed a large constituency within the college population – a majority in most colleges (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1). It was a declared part of the colleges' goals to provide appropriately for the full range of 16+ student needs, and to promote a distinctive tertiary ethos, embracing all institutional members. The extended comprehensiveness ideology discussed in Chapter 4.3 included developing parity of esteem among *all* organizational members, including part-time students (though the extent to which this was enacted was questioned by some principals and senior staff). Given these aspirations, it would seem important for the achievement of college goals that part-time students should see themselves as valued members of the college community. It was also felt useful to include part-time students' views because at the time of the study (and, indeed, since) this group had received little attention in research studies. The Dean *et al.* (1979) and King (1976) studies did not include part-time students. The evidence that did exist suggested

that their needs took second place to those of full-time students in FE colleges generally. As Locke and Bloomfield (1982) found *'the [FE] colleges' concern is with full-time students'.*

The current study therefore sought to assess part-time student views on college life and work and the general atmosphere of their colleges, comparing their perspectives with those of full-time students. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 show the employment position and attendance modes of part-time students in the sample.

Employment position	***N=***	***%age***
In a paid job full-time	711	83.0
In a paid job part-time	35	4.1
Unemployed, seeking a full-time job	25	2.9
Unemployed, seeking a part-time job	6	0.7
Full-time housewife	32	3.7
Retired	4	0.5
Other	41	4.8
Total	**854**	**100**

Table 7.1: Employment status of part-time students

Attendance mode	*N=*	*%age*
Sandwich/block release	26	3.1
Day release	483	58.1
Part-time day	46	5.5
Part-time evening	186	22.3
Part-time day and evening	91	10.9
Total	**832**	**100**

Table 7.2: Attendance mode of part-time students

The analysis of part-time student responses is organized in the same way as that for full-time students in Chapter 6, in relation to research questions (d) to (g), i.e.

(d) how far did students share the official view of the goals and distinctive ethos of the colleges?

(e) what degree of integration did students perceive between academic/vocational and full-time/part-time areas of work and students?

(f) how far did students perceive pastoral care provision to be effective?

(g) how far were particular forms of organization and college size linked with differences in (d) to (f) above?

7.2 Question (d): College goals and ethos

It was claimed by tertiary college principals that the colleges provided an appropriate curriculum for all 16-19 students: 'the college should organize resources so that it

provides for each student, full-time or part-time, an individual programme of studies ...' (College 2, 'Tertiary education – definition and purpose', p. 1). It was also argued that the colleges had developed a distinctive ethos to cater for the needs of part-time as well as full-time students (see Chapter 4.2). Part-time student views on question (d) were therefore examined with reference to their perspectives on: (1) their course programmes and (2) on the general atmosphere or ethos of their colleges.

7.2.1 Course programmes

Students were asked whether they were studying their first choice of course/subjects. 89.5% (N=727) were doing so, a result which compares favourably with that for full-time students, of whom just under 80% were following their first choice. However, it should be remembered the full-time students had considerably more discretion as regards course/subject options; 'choices' for part-time students were much more constrained, in particular by employer requirements. The main reason for not taking a first choice of course was employer requirements, with fewer respondents noting that their preferred option was not offered by the college. About a third of the part-time sample were taking subjects they did not want to take, a similar proportion to the full-time group, with male students, and those following TEC and C & G courses more likely to be doing so than other sub groups. The main reasons given were employer requirements and that the subjects were a compulsory part of the course. Like many full-time students, the part-time group were often less than enthusiastic about the general studies element of their courses. One commented: '*Because I'm a mechanic ... I only want to learn about engines and cars and not about money and insurance, etc., like in General Studies*'. Just over a quarter of the sample were not taking subjects they would like to study, with GCE students reporting this to a greater extent than other groups. The main reasons given were that these subjects were not part of the course or that other subjects were more important, with lower numbers of students noting that the subject(s) they wished to take were not offered by the college.

Thus, on the whole, the part-time group expressed relatively positive views on course choice, with the large majority studying their first options. Some students, like the full-time group, were studying unwanted subjects, but this was usually because they were part of an externally prescribed course package (e.g. for TEC or C & G qualifications) or required by employers. Again some students were not studying subjects they would like to take, but this was usually a result of practical constraints of time, etc. rather than college requirements or failure to offer these subjects.

7.2.2 Atmosphere and ethos of the college

Student views on the atmosphere of their colleges were examined by means of a set of attitude statements designed to elicit their perspectives on various aspects of student life and work and the general ethos of the college. For purposes of comparison, the statements were as far as possible the same as those in the full-time student questionnaire. 18 of the attitude statements were the same as those for full-time students, since they represented areas of concern for both groups. The two exceptions were as follows:

Part-time questionnaire statements:

> *'Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here'*, and *'Part-time students are not important to the college'*

were substituted for full-time questionnaire statements:

> *'College life is a good preparation for going to work or future education'*, and *'I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job'.*

Table 7.3 shows students' percentage agreement with positive items and disagreement

with negative items (marked * in the table), with responses for the full-time sample in brackets. The items were intermixed in the questionnaire to avoid problems of 'response set' (Coolican, 1990). In Table 7.3 they have been regrouped into the various categories covered in the set of attitude statements.

		%ages	
		part-time	*(full-time)*
	a) General atmosphere and ethos		
1.	This college has a friendly atmosphere	69.4	(84.2)
2.	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived at college	80.3	(78.2)
3.	The college is impersonal and unfriendly	75.5*	(85.0)
4.	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	44.6	(68.4)
	b) Extent of adult treatment		
5.	There are too many rules and regulations	52.5*	(78.4)
6.	I feel that students are treated as adults here	69.7	(76.5)
7.	The college gives students too much freedom	64.6*	(82.9)
	c) Social relationships with students		
8.	I have made a lot of friends since I came to college.	66.6	(84.7)
9+	I don't know many staff or students at college	47.9*	(80.6)
	d) Social relationships with staff		
10.	The staff are not interested in the students as people	64.9*	(75.7)
11.	I feel that I know some staff well	49.2	(68.4)
9+	I don't know many staff or students at college	47.9*	(80.6)
	College work:		
	e) General views		
12.	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	71.2	(81.9)
13.	I shall be sorry to leave college	27.7	(41.9)

14.	If I had the choice again I would not come to college	67.0*	(77.8)
	f) Extent of supervision and help from staff		
15.	Students are not made to work hard enough	66.4*	(70.7)
16.	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	40.7	(59.5)
17.	Students are expected to work by themselves too much before they are able to	56.8*	(63.5)
	g) Exam pressure		
18.	The college is only interested in students passing exams	40.4*	(59.6)
	h) Provision for part-time students specifically		
19.	Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here	58.2	(N/A)
20.	Part-time students are not important to the college	67.5*	(N/A)

Table 7.3: Part-time student attitudes to college

+ Item 9 is listed under both headings - (c) and (d) - to which it applies.

* Negative items - percentage disagree/strongly disagree.

Details of all response categories for the part-time sample are shown in Appendix 7, Table 7a. Part-time student responses showed less positive attitudes than the full-time group, on all items except no.2 'I found it easy to settle down when I arrived,' where a marginally greater proportion of part-timers agreed with the statement. The relatively high proportion of 'don't know' responses for some items (see Table 7a) especially nos. 4, 5, 7, 13 and 16 may suggest an absence of strong views on these issues, and a greater degree of ambivalence in attitudes towards college than was evident among the full-time group.

Part-time student responses may have reflected rather different expectations from those of full-time students, stemming from the less important role that college life in general played in the lives of the part-time group. However, with respect to items on the college ethos in general, part-time students expressed fairly positive views, and more positive in the case of item 2 as mentioned earlier. Item 4 (the college offers plenty of opportunities) is an exception here, but as the high proportion of 'don't know' answers (26.7%) suggests, the broader opportunities of college life were probably of less importance to part-time students who were primarily concerned with work-related training and spent relatively short periods of time each week at college. As regards items on being treated as adults, similar percentages of both groups agreed with item 6. On items 5 and 7 (too many rules, too much freedom), part-time students showed less positive views, perhaps reflecting a perception that college rules and expectations were more restrictive in comparison with those of the workplace.

With respect to social relationships with students and relationships with staff, part-time students responses, perhaps surprisingly, showed two thirds agreeing that 'I have made a lot of friends since coming to college'. On the other items on relationships at college they showed considerably lower proportions than full-time students feeling that they knew staff and students well. With respect to college work, part time students showed relatively positive views on the relevant items, though less positive than full-time students. Perhaps not surprisingly, only about a quarter agreed that they would be sorry to leave college, possibly reflecting part-time students' instrumental approach towards college, i.e. as a means to the end of achieving job-related qualifications (Gleeson and Mardle, 1980), rather than concern for the more expressive aspects of college life. On the other hand, responses to items dealing with provision for part-time students in particular (nos. 19 and 20) indicate reasonably high levels of satisfaction, especially on the latter item. This would indicate that part-time students saw the colleges to be meeting their needs, at least to some degree. Overall, though, responses showed lower levels of satisfaction than those of full-time students on all but one of the areas of college

life examined, suggesting that part-time students shared the values and ethos of the colleges to a lesser extent than their full-time counterparts.

7.3 Question (e): Integration between academic/ vocational and full/part-time students

As with full-time students, the extent to which part-time students saw the integrative goals of the colleges to be achieved in practice was examined with reference particularly to social integration. The staff survey looked at organizational factors in bringing together ex-school and FE groups and areas of work, but these factors were not of direct relevance to part-time student experiences of college life. The study therefore examined part-time student perspectives on the degree to which they took part in college activities, and their friendship patterns and opportunities to meet those on other courses. If the colleges' integrative aims were having an impact on students' experiences of college, one would expect part-time students to show some evidence of participation in extra-curricular activities and social mixing beyond their course programmes. At the same time it is important to recognize the practical difficulties, and the caveats about these expressed by senior staff (see Chapter 4.3). Two issues were explored: (1) students' involvement in extra-curricular and social aspects of college and the students' union; and (2) friendship patterns and opportunities to meet students on other courses.

7.3.1 Extra-curricular activities and Students' Union

Like the full-time students, the part-time group were asked to indicate whether they took an active part in any sports, cultural and social activities at college. Only 28 respondents (3.2% of the overall sample) indicated that they took part in one or more sporting activities, and 14 (1.6%) in any cultural activities, such as music, drama, film club, orchestra. Similarly, 24 students (2.8%) reported that they participated in one or more social and recreational activities such as college discos. The results show an even lower

participation rate in extra-curricular events and activities than that found for the full-time group (see Appendix 6, Table 6j).

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they took part in the college students' union (SU), and about the role and importance of the SU in college life. It was expected that part-timers would show little interest in the SU and its activities. However, it must of course be remembered that SUs represented part-time students as well as their full-time colleagues. In theory, at least, SUs promoted the interests of, and social activities for, both groups. In most of the surveyed colleges steps were taken to make this explicit and to encourage part-time students to take an active part in union activities. Thus, for example, in some cases a place on the college SU executive was reserved for a part-time student. More frequently, though, the SU executive and its concerns were the preserve of full-time students.

The vast majority of the part-time group (nearly 98%) never attended SU meetings, and only 0.9% (7 students) claimed to attend usually or sometimes. Similarly, only 5.9% of students felt that the SU played an important part in the life of the college, 33% that it did not, with over 60% of 'don't know' answers. (Corresponding figures for the full-time group were 22.7% reporting that the SU was important, 394.% that it was not, with 37.7% of 'don't know' answers.) Thus an even larger majority than for the full-time group saw the union as having little importance in college life. Just over a third of part-time students, 35%, felt that the SU *should* play an important role, though over 40% were undecided. In comparison, nearly 60% of the full-time sample felt that the SU *should* play a more prominent part. Thus while full-time students showed little evidence of much actual participation in extra-curricular activities and the SU, the majority saw the union as a potentially important aspect of college life, indicating some support for the more active development of its role. Part-timers on the other hand showed extremely low levels of involvement in extra-curricular activities in general and lower levels of interest than the full-time group in developing the role of the SU. It may be that the part-

time group saw both these issues as very marginal to their concerns at college.

7.3.2 Friendship patterns and opportunities to meet other students

Advocates of the tertiary colleges, and senior staff, argued that this form of organization offered at least the opportunity for part-time students to become involved in extra-curricular aspects of college life and to mix socially to some degree with their full-time colleagues (see Chapter 4.3 above). It was suggested that, since in a tertiary system all post-16 students transfer to one institution, there was scope for the continuation of friendship groups from school among students who would otherwise have been in separate institutions, and the possibility of some extent of social mixing among all students in the age group.

Respondents were therefore asked to indicate how many students from their year group at school had transferred to college, either as full- or part-time students.. Just under 25% responded that a half or more students from their group at school came on to college, as compared with over 40% of full-time students. This would tend to indicate less possibility of the continuation of friendships formed at school than among the full-time group. As one might expect, students in larger colleges were significantly less likely to report that a half or more of their year group had transferred to the college.

Table 7.4 shows the main friendship groups among part-time respondents, with comparable results for full-time students in brackets. (Although they were asked to select the *one* main group to which most of their friends belonged, some students indicated more than one group.) The results show some continuation of friendships formed at school for just under 10% of the sample, but a majority drew most of their friends from outside college, again indicating that the part-time group tended not to see college as a central aspect of their lives, both in terms of work related and social aspects.

This contrasts with full-time students, 60% of whom reported their main friendship group as located within the college.

	%ages	
	Part-time	(Full-time)
Most friends are:		
Old friends from school now attending college	8.4	(18.1)
New friends made at college	27.6	(60.1)
Friends from outside college	59.3	(14.2)
From more than one of these groups	4.6	(7.6)

Table 7.4: Part-time student friendship groups

Students' reported opportunities to meet those on other courses are shown in Table 7.5. The results indicate some degree of possible interaction across course groups for just under a fifth of respondents, though for the large majority there was seen to be little or no perceived opportunity for this. In comparison, about 56% of the full-time sample indicated that this was possible at least to some extent (see Chapter 6, Table 6.7).

	N =	*%age*
A great deal	22	3.0
A fair amount	116	15.9
Not very much	310	42.5
None at all	281	38.5
Total	**729**	**100**

Table 7.5: Extent of opportunities to meet students on other courses

College size again had an impact on student perspectives. Students in smaller colleges were about twice as likely as those in larger ones to report at least a fair amount of opportunity to meet others. On the whole, the part-time group reported considerably lower opportunities to meet others than the full-time group. This is perhaps not

surprising, given the constraints to cross-course mixing, especially for students who spent only part of the week at college and had a tightly structured course programme.

However, the extent of opportunities to meet others needs to be considered in conjunction with the extent to which students themselves wished to mix across course groupings. Evidence examined so far in this chapter tends to indicate that part-time students may not have been particularly interested in doing so. Respondents were therefore asked whether they would welcome more opportunities to meet students on other courses. Just over a quarter of students replied that they would like more opportunities, though over a third would not, and the remaining 40% were undecided, reflecting a considerable degree of ambivalence in students' attitudes towards this issue.

A similar proportion of full-time students (see Chapter 6, Table 6.8) would have welcomed more opportunities to meet others, suggesting that efforts by the colleges to promote greater social integration would have been supported by a substantial minority of both student groups. There was however a considerable degree of uncertainty about this among both groups as indicated by the relatively high percentages of 'don't know' answers.

Overall, with reference to research question (e), part-time student attitudes provided little evidence that the integrative aims of the colleges were being achieved for this group of students, despite the efforts of the colleges to involve them. There was some evidence of perceived opportunity to mix across course groupings (though considerably less than for full-time students), and some support for extending opportunities for this to take place. This would suggest that more could have been done to integrate part-time students more fully into the college community. On the other hand, the very low levels of reported involvement in extra curricular activities, the patterns of friendship groupings, together with high proportions of 'don't know' answers on items relating to greater involvement, all suggest that part-time student *attitudes*, rather than college-related factors, were a

major barrier to greater social integration. For part-time students, on the whole, social activities and friendship groups were located outside college. It would therefore seem that the hope of integrating part-timers more fully into the college community was a somewhat idealistic one. As one of the principals noted: *'We would like to see more mixing of full and part-timers, but it is difficult to see this being widely possible'* (College 9).

7.4 Research question (f): Pastoral care and guidance provision

As discussed in Chapter 6.4, the colleges took considerable steps to provide adequate pastoral care and guidance for full-time students both on college entry and during their time at college. Nonetheless, a substantial proportion of students expressed the need for more help and advice on various aspects of their life and work at college, particularly guidance on course choice, work and progress, and careers.

Part-time day and sandwich release students were allocated to a course tutor, who was responsible for their work and progress and general welfare while at college. All part-time students also had access to the careers and counselling services provided by the colleges. However, as the majority of part-time students were in employment (see Table 7.1), one would expect them to have less need for careers advice than the full-time group. Since part-timers spent a limited amount of time each week at college, one might expect that they would express less interest in guidance provision than full-time students, and that they would be more satisfied with existing arrangements for guidance and advice. It might also be expected that part-timers would encounter fewer problems in settling down at college since the major transition for them was not between school and college but between school and the workplace environment.

On the other hand, research on provision for part-time students in FE colleges in general

showed that the guidance needs of this group received less attention than those of full-time students. Thus for example Locke and Bloomfield (1982) found that college admission and induction procedures for part-timers were limited, and guidance and information in prospectuses was less thorough on part-time courses; *'the colleges' concern is with full-time students'* (p. 5). Similarly Whitaker *et al.* (1987) note that *'part-time students did not have the same extent of pastoral care as those studying full-time'* (p. 70), including careers guidance. As regards careers advice, *'those on full-time courses received more help than those on part-time courses'* (ibid.). This evidence might lead one to expect that part-time students might not see their pastoral needs as being adequately met, notwithstanding the claims of the colleges to provide for the guidance needs of all students. The study reported here examined four areas of pastoral provision for part-time students: guidance on transition to college, and personal, work and careers guidance. These are discussed below.

7.4.1 Transition to college

The part-time study examined three aspects of transition to college: (a) advice on course choice; (b) the amount of time taken to settle down at college; (c) the adequacy of guidance received by students when transferring to college.

It was felt important to ask part-time students about the adequacy of the advice they had received on course choice, since it was claimed by senior staff that this was an important concern of the colleges for part-time as well as full-time students. Staff surveyed, on the whole, felt that guidance on transition to college was an area of strength in the colleges' provision (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29). For part-time students on release courses, guidance on course choice could be expected to be relatively straightforward and simple because programmes of study were largely linked to students' occupations and employer requirements, and hence little real 'choice' for the students was involved. One would therefore expect these students to express relatively high levels of satisfaction with the

guidance received.

Nearly 63% of the sample reported having had enough help and information on course choice, a significantly higher proportion than for the full-time group, of whom only just over 40% felt that they had received enough help. However, about 11% of the part-time group would have liked a lot more advice and the remaining 26% a little more. Day/sandwich release students showed significantly lower levels of satisfaction on this issue than non-release students. These results suggest a surprisingly large demand for more advice on course choice, particularly among release students. This would indicate a need for greater guidance provision in this area, not just by the colleges, but by other agencies concerned, particularly employers' training officers in the case of release students.

Student perspectives on the amount of time taken to settle down at college are shown in Table 7.6. The majority, nearly two thirds, felt that they had settled within two weeks with a further quarter doing so in a month. Comparable figures for the full-time sample were 57.7% and 26% respectively, suggesting that both groups had adjusted to college relatively quickly. Unlike the full-time sample, though, part-time students in larger colleges were less likely to settle down within two weeks than those in smaller colleges, and release students were also less likely than others to settle within this period.

Amount of time	***N =***	***%ages***
1 week	288	34.6
2 weeks	237	28.5
1 month	212	25.5
A term	53	6.4
More than a term	43	5.2
Total	**833**	**100**

Table 7.6: Amount of time taken to settle down at college

Respondents were also asked to indicate their views on the adequacy of guidance they received on transition to college and adjusting to the new environment. Results are shown in Table 7.7, with corresponding percentages for full-time students in brackets. Despite the expectation that part-time students might be more likely than the full-time group to view existing guidance provision as appropriate, the percentages for both groups are very similar, indicating little difference of perspective between the two. The two part-time groups which were less likely to settle quickly at college - release students and those in larger colleges - were also less likely to be satisfied with the amount of guidance received. As suggested in Chapter 6.4, guidance provision may be an area where demand is never entirely satisfied. Nonetheless, these results would tend to suggest that considerably more might have been done to facilitate the process of transition to college for a substantial group - over 25% - of part-time students, particularly release students and those in larger colleges.

Amount of time	*N* =	*%ages*
I had enough help/guidance	599	72.1 (68.7)
Would have liked a little more help	162	19.5 (23.0)
Would have liked a lot more help	70	8.4 (8.3)
Total	**831**	**100**

Table 7.7: Adequacy of guidance on transition to college.

7.4.2 Pastoral care: personal welfare, course work and careers guidance

The colleges aimed to provide parity of treatment for all students, both full and part-time. On the other hand, research studies have shown that, at least in FE colleges generally, the needs of part-time students have tended to take second place to those of full-time students (Locke and Bloomfield, 1982; Whitaker *et al.*, 1987). As noted earlier, since part-time students spent only a limited period of time each week at college, it might be

expected that they would feel less need for pastoral guidance than the full-time group, and be more satisfied with existing levels of provision in this area. It was therefore important to examine their views on the extent of guidance they had received after transition to college, and how far this was seen as appropriate.

Respondents were asked to indicate how much advice and guidance they had received during their time at college, in three main areas: personal welfare, work and progress and future career/education (see Table 7.8). The results show rather low proportions reporting that they had received at least a fair amount of guidance on personal matters and careers, with a much higher proportion – over two thirds – for work and progress.

	a great deal	*a fair amount*	*not very much*	*none at all*	*N = 100%*
Personal welfare	5.5	14.1	28.6	51.7	803
Work and progress	18.5	49.6	20.9	11.0	815
Future career/ed.	7.4	19.0	25.6	48.1	802

Table 7.8: Amount of guidance received

As with issues explored earlier in this section, students in larger colleges were significantly less likely to have received at least a fair amount of guidance on work and progress and careers, though release students were more likely to have done so than non-release students on both these areas. Overall, the amount of guidance reported by the part-time group on all three areas was less than that for the full-time group (see Chapter 6, Table 6.10), indicating perhaps that the needs of the latter received more attention from the colleges.

Guidance provision on personal matters may be a fairly subtle process stemming from day-to-day interaction with course tutors and other staff. Students may therefore have been relatively unaware of such provision, unless they had sought help for particular

problems. For this reason, they were also asked whether they felt they were known personally by at least one member of staff. This provided a broad indicator of the perceived accessibility of personal guidance. The establishment of effective personal relationships with staff is arguably as important for part-time students' progress and development as it is for full-time students. 73.7% of the part-time group felt that they were known by at least one member of staff, as compared with 79% of full-time students. There were no significant differences between larger and smaller colleges and those from different attendance modes (release/non release). These results would tend to suggest that, on the whole, the majority of part-time students had been able to develop effective working relationships with at least one member of staff, and that there were no great disparities on this issue between the part-time and the full-time group.

Nonetheless, the reported amount of guidance received on each of the three areas examined was less for the part-time group (see Tables 7.8 and 6.10). This, though, must be considered in the context of students' *desired* levels of guidance provision. It may be that part-time students did not feel the need for pastoral provision to the same extent as the full-time group. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate how much guidance they would like to receive in each of the three areas. Five response categories were provided, ranging from 'much less' to 'much more'.

	much less	***a little less***	***neither more nor less***	***a little more***	***much more***	***N = 100%***
Personal welfare	5.3	3.8	66.7	18.8	5.5	768
Work and progress	1.8	1.3	43.6	34.1	19.2	795
Future career/ed	3.3	1.5	48.4	23.4	23.3	781

Table 7.9: Desired amounts of guidance

Results (see Table 7.9) showed that, as regards guidance on personal welfare, about two

thirds of the sample regarded the existing level of provision as adequate, and some 9% suggested that they would prefer less advice on this. Thus about 24% of respondents expressed the need for more personal guidance. Comparable percentages for the other two guidance areas, however, were much higher; in both cases less than 50% expressed satisfaction with the existing level of provision, and for work and progress 53.3% would have liked more advice, and for careers, 46.7%. As with other items discussed in this section, release students and those in larger colleges showed significantly higher proportions wanting more guidance on their work and progress at college. Like the figures for the full-time sample (see Chapter 6, Table 6.11), these figures would tend to indicate a considerable disparity between actual and desired levels of guidance provision. Student perspectives on this issue were also at variance with those of staff who expressed generally high levels of satisfaction with their colleges' pastoral care for students (see Chapter 5, Table 5.29). It seems that the students themselves saw a considerable need for a greater degree of provision in this area, particularly in the case of feedback and advice on their work and progress, and on their future career and educational possibilities. Careers advice to part-time students was provided on request by the colleges in the study. However, it had been traditionally assumed that part-time students, most of whom were already in employment, had little need for this service. The evidence here would seem to suggest that the traditional assumptions were no longer valid, especially in the light of increasing uncertainties about continuing employment prospects for many young people at the time of the survey.

Those who had indicated the need for a little/much more help in any of the three areas were asked to note what kind of advice and guidance they would find helpful (see Appendix 7, Table 7b). The largest proportion of responses, 42%, referred to a need for more detailed advice and/or feedback on course work, suggesting such possibilities as more detailed tutor comments on written work, termly reports on progress, staff assessment of students' chances of passing end-of-course examinations, and encouragement to work harder. The next largest proportion of responses, just over one

fifth of the total, related to careers guidance, suggesting the provision of more detailed information on local job opportunities, general careers prospects arising from successful completion of current courses, and more detailed matters such as help in completion of job application forms, and visits to local firms. A similar proportion of responses related to information and advice on further and higher education possibilities, availability of, and applications for, relevant courses, and future study options in general.

In comparison with full-time students' responses to this item (see Appendix 6, Table 6m), part-time students showed similar concerns. Part-time students' responses referred more frequently to the area of work and progress at college, whereas full-time answers gave more priority to careers guidance. Perhaps surprisingly, a greater proportion of part-time responses (17%) referred to further/higher education opportunities, as compared with only 9.6% of full-time student answers. This may be because more extensive and systematic provision was made for full-time students in this area, and they were thus less likely to suggest this as an aspect of guidance provision which might be improved.

Overall, the findings discussed in this section provide some evidence of positive attitudes among part-time students towards the colleges' pastoral provision, in terms of the adequacy of personal guidance, being known by at least one staff member and the relative ease with which they had settled down at college. However, part-time students reported lower levels of guidance provision than the full-time group in each of the three areas examined, providing some evidence to suggest that the lower priority accorded to part-timers in FE colleges generally may also have been present in the tertiary colleges. Generally part-time students, like their full-time counterparts, expressed considerable demand for more guidance provision, particularly on work and progress and careers/further education. This demand was especially evident among those in larger colleges and students sponsored by employers. Students' perspectives on the adequacy of the colleges' pastoral care were considerably less positive than those of senior managers and of staff.

7.5 Question (g): Sub-group differences in student attitudes

Various subgroups of the part-time sample were examined to see whether there were differences similar to those found among full-time students (see Chapter 6.5). The study sought to explore whether particular groups among the part-time respondents saw the colleges as meeting their needs to a significantly greater or lesser extent than other groups. Among full-time students, considerable disparities were found in students' perceptions of their various colleges, and less marked differences between other subgroups, with second and third year students, those studying A level and other GCE courses, and those of higher attainment showing rather more positive attitudes than other groups. Girls and students in smaller colleges were also somewhat more likely than others to report high levels of satisfaction on several aspects of the colleges' provision.

For part-time students it was expected that the various subgroups would show less marked differences than parallel full-time groups, since college formed a much less important concern for all part-time students. It was, however, suggested that there might be broad differences between sponsored students (i.e. those on day/sandwich release from employment) and those attending college on their own initiative, since the motivation and attitudes towards education and training of these two groups were likely to be rather dissimilar. It was also of interest to investigate whether the considerable inter-college differences in full-time student perspectives would be repeated among the part-time group. If there were similar disparities, despite the very differing needs and levels of involvement in college life of full and part-timers, this would reinforce the suggestion made earlier (see Chapter 6.6) that factors relating to the culture of individual colleges may have exerted a significant influence on student views. (The group of students from College 3 (17 cases) was excluded from the analysis in this section as the numbers were too small for comparative statistical analysis.)

As for the full-time sample, the set of attitude statements in the questionnaire (see Table 7.3 above) above was used as a basis for comparing part-time student subgroup views. The statements provided a broad indicator of students' levels of satisfaction with their work in college and the general college atmosphere. Various sets of part-time student subgroups were examined: those in larger and smaller colleges, gender groups, first years and others, attainment level and attendance mode groupings, course groups, and individual college subsamples.

7.5.1 College size

There were significant differences between larger and smaller colleges on three of the attitude statements (see Table 7.10); in each case, those in larger colleges expressed less positive views. Two of the items related to the general atmosphere and ethos of the college, suggesting that this factor, rather than teaching provision and other factors examined in the set of attitude statements, was viewed in a rather less positive light in larger colleges. Full-time students showed divergences between larger and smaller colleges on a slightly larger range of items (five as compared with three). However, for the part-time group, the finding of no significant difference on 17 of the 20 attitude items would suggest that in most areas of college life, part-time students experienced no particular difficulties in larger colleges.

	% agree/strongly agree		N =	chi square signif. %age, p = <
Item	*Colleges*			
	larger	*smaller*		
a) General atmosphere and ethos				
1. This college has a friendly atmosphere	84.2	76.1	724	2.5
3. The college is impersonal and unfriendly	9.9	17.3	731	1.0
e) College work: general views				
13. I shall be sorry to leave college	39.6	29.6	644	2.5

Table 7.10: Part-time student attitudes by college size

7.5.2 Gender differences

A comparison of male and female part-time student attitudes showed differences on a rather broader spectrum of items than full-time respondents, (see Appendix 7, Table 7c), on 13 items as opposed to only 5 for the full-time group. The percentage difference between boys and girls on individual items also tended to be larger among the part-time group (see Chapter 6, Table 6.13). As with full-time respondents, girls showed more positive views on all these items. The only exception here was item 18 - *'I don't know many staff or students at college'*, where girls were more likely than boys to agree with the statement.

Overall, these results would seem to suggest that while part-time students on the whole expressed lower levels of satisfaction with college than full-time students, the differences in part-time boys' and girls' perceptions of college life were much greater than the gender differences among full-time students. Part-time boys showed significantly less positive

views on many aspects of college life than part-time girls. These results would tend to suggest that the colleges needed to take greater steps to meet the needs of part-time male students in particular. Most of this group were based in the technical and vocational areas of college which had earlier been part of the pre-existing FE college (except in College 9). Since FE colleges, at least at the time of the study, were characterized by a strongly male oriented and dominated ambience (see Gleeson and Mardle, 1980; Locke and Bloomfield, 1982), one might have expected part-time male students to have more positive perspectives on college life than their female counterparts. King (1976) found that (for full-time students) girls had a less satisfactory experience of FE colleges than boys. This would suggest that the tertiary colleges, in incorporating a large proportion for full-time and non-vocational 16-19 provision, accompanied by a balance between treating students as adults and regulating their work and behaviour, may have moved, to a significant degree, away from the male-dominated ambience and culture traditional in FE colleges, particularly from the point of view of part-time students (gender differences were less marked for the full-time sample).

7.5.3 First years and other students

There were again some quite large disparities between the attitudes of first year and second/third year students on a majority (13) of the attitude items included in the questionnaire (see Appendix 7, Table 7d). First year students showed significantly more positive views than second and third year students on a majority (10) of these 13 items, spanning most of the areas of college life covered by the attitude statements. This may be because many first year students attended college in groups sponsored by particular employers; they therefore formed a relatively homogeneous group and perhaps found it fairly easy to adjust to college life. Second and third year students on the other hand, often studying higher level courses, were less likely to be sponsored by employers in large groups. They were therefore, more likely to attend classes which comprised students from a number of employers, and thus may have formed less cohesive groups

which were less well integrated into college life. It may also be that for second and third year students the novelty of college, as a day away from work, had worn off as their college studies became more demanding. Those three items for which second and third year students showed significantly more positive views were:

'I have made a lot of friends since I came to college'.

'I don't know many staff or students at college'.

'I feel that I know some staff well'.

These items all concern the area of social and working relationships - with students and with staff. Since second and third year students had attended college for longer, it is probably to be expected that they felt they knew both staff and students reasonably well, to a greater extent than first years. Second and third year respondents were likely to have had more opportunity to make friends with others outside their own course groups and to have established closer working relationships with staff. However, apart from these three items, first year students tended to show more positive attitudes on the other 10 items for which there were significant differences between the two groups.

7.5.4 Attainment level

Analysis was also conducted on higher and lower attaining subgroups of the part-time sample. As for the full-time group (see Chapter 6.5.7), the ILEA scale for scoring students' GCE/CSE results was used. Results were then divided into a higher attaining group (21 points or more) and a lower attaining one (0-20 points). It will be remembered that within the full-time sample, students of lower attainment expressed less positive views than higher attainment respondents on a number of items. However, for the part-time sample, there were no significant differences between attainment groups on 19 of

the 20 attitude items. For the remaining item, *'students are expected to work too much by themselves before they are able'*, 40.4% of the lower attainment group agreed as compared with only 30.4% of the higher attainers (p= < 5.0%). It would therefore seem that, apart from this rather small difference with respect to working independently, which is not unexpected, there were no major differences between the two attainment groups with respect to their levels of satisfaction with life and work at college.

7.5.5 Attendance mode

As expected, there were disparities of perspective between those attending college on sandwich/block/day release from employment and non-sponsored students. As Appendix 7, Table 7e shows, there were significant differences on 15 of the 20 attitude items. On all but one of these, sponsored students showed significantly less positive views than those attending college on their own initiative, on the range of areas of college life covered by the attitude statements.

These results are not unexpected, since motivation, commitment and interest in college life and work were likely to be lower among students who were required to attend as part of the conditions of their employment, than among those who chose to attend, and were sometimes paying their own fees and expenses, and hence had a greater financial and psychological investment in their continuing education. The only one of the 15 significant items for which non-sponsored attenders showed less positive views was *'I don't know many staff or students at college'*. Again, this is probably to be expected since, as mentioned earlier, many of those attending college on release from employment did so with groups of colleagues from work. Non-release attenders, on the other hand, were likely to attend as individuals rather than with a group, and hence were less likely to know many other students. Also many voluntary attenders attended college for general and non-vocational classes, particularly GCE courses, many of which were of only one year's duration. Hence such students would have had less opportunity than others of

meeting a wide variety of students and staff.

7.5.6 Course groups

As with full-time students, there were marked differences between groups studying different courses. Part-time courses were classified into four broad groups:

(1) GCE, Open College and pre-university;

(2) BEC and secretarial;

(3) City and Guilds;

(4) TEC courses.

As Appendix 7, Table 7f shows, there were significant course group differences on 17 of the 20 attitude items. On all except three of these items, the course groups tended to show a similar pattern of differences, with the GCE group tending to give the most positive and the TEC group the least satisfactory ratings. The inter-group differences were quite large, over 20% between the highest and lowest groups for most of these 14 items, and over 30% on the following three:

'I shall be sorry to leave college';

'Students here get plenty of individual help from staff'; and

'Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here'.

This pattern of differences between GCE and TEC groups was not reflected in three

items: nos. 8, 9 and 15, i.e. those dealing with making many friends at college, knowing many staff and students, and not being made to work hard enough. In each case, GCE students tended to show lower levels of satisfaction than other groups. The first two of these items refer to relationships at college, and it may be that GCE students comprised less homogeneous groups than those attending college for vocational courses, and hence had less extensive friendship groups at college than the latter students. On the third of these items, relating to whether students were made to work hard enough, it may be that GCE students were more committed and highly motivated towards their courses of study and exam success, and hence felt the need to be made to work hard to a greater extent than vocational groups.

It would seem that, within the part-time group, GCE students, on the whole, had more positive attitudes towards their life and work at college than other course groups. Similar differences of perspective were reflected in part-time students' comments at the end of the questionnaire. Here many vocational part-time students expressed the attitude that college represented a day's escape from work, an opportunity to socialize and 'mess about' with their 'mates'. For some, the high point of the day was the opportunity to go to the pub at lunch time with a group of friends. For many of these students, the work-related aspects of college life seemed to be a necessary but somewhat tedious chore to be fitted in between periods of social activity with their friends at lunch and break times and after college. GCE students, on the other hand, tended to attend college for a much shorter period, usually for only one or two classes per week, rather than a whole day or day and evening session. They tended to express a much higher level of commitment to the work-related rather than social aspects of their life at college, and to the importance of passing their exams.

The differences between GCE and vocational part-time students in these respects may be compared with the disparities between these two groups among the full-time sample (see Chapter 6.5.7). There too, on the whole, GCE students, with the exception of those

taking O level only, tended to show more positive attitudes towards their life and work at college. It may be that both full and part-time students pursuing GCE or general education courses, as opposed to vocational options, were more highly motivated and committed to their academic development, and more attuned to the norms and values of an educational institution, than those on vocational courses (see King's (1976) analysis of 'academic' and 'vocational' ideologies discussed in Chapter 2.4). While the underlying factors here may have had more to do with attitudes to continuing education in general, rather than the type of institution in which it is offered, these results, nonetheless, suggest that there were implications for the colleges in terms of potential strategies for developing more positive attitudes towards college among vocational students, as well as other, overlapping, subgroups discussed earlier - male students, second and third years and sponsored students.

7.5.7 Inter-college differences

Tables 7.11 and 7.12 show inter-college differences on positive and negative items respectively, with colleges shown in rank order from the one showing the highest percentage agreement to the lowest on positively worded items, and the highest to lowest percentage *disagreement* for negatively worded items. As the tables show, there were again fairly large differences between colleges, though on the whole these tended to be smaller than for the full-time group, and less likely to be statistically significant. Part-time respondents showed an inter-college range of more than 25% on five items (as compared with nine items for the full-time group). Similarly, part-timers showed statistically significant differences on eight of the 20 items (as compared with 16 items for the full-time group). These eight items are listed below.

Item no.

a) General atmosphere and ethos

1) This college has a friendly atmosphere.

2) I found it easy to settle down at college.

3) The college is impersonal and unfriendly.

4) The college offers students plenty of opportunities.

b) Extent to which students are treated as adults

5) There are too many rules and regulations.

6) I feel that students are treated as adults here.

7) The college gives students too much freedom.

c) Social relationships with students

8) I have made a lot of friends since I came to college.

Attitude Item No.	Highest		College Number							Lowest		Range* %	chi square signif. %age p = <
1.	9	(92.7)	1	11	8	7	10	6	5	2	4	(69.0)	23.7	5.0
2.	9	(92.9)	11	10	1	6	8	2	5	4	7	(71.0)	21.9	0.5
4.	11	(77.8)	9	1	10	5	6	7	2/4	8		(51.4)	26.4	1.0
6.	10	(86.4)	9	6	1	11	4	5	7	8	2	(68.3)	18.1	2.5
8.	10	(88.4)	2	6	11	5	4	7	8	9	1	(58.3)	30.1	1.0
11.	2	(67.9)	7	9	10	5	8	6	11	4	1	(50.0)	17.9	NS
12.	10	(86.1)	9	6	11	5	7	1	4	8	2	(71.0)	15.1	NS
13.	10	(49.1)	2	9	7	8	11	5	4	1	6	(24.3)	24.8	NS
16.	9	(62.5)	10	5	7	2	8	11	6	1	4	(43.7)	18.8	NS
19.	5	(77.1)	1	8	10	9	11	7	4	6	2	(57.1)	20.0	NS

Table 7.11: Part-time student attitudes: positive items, percentage agreement by college, in rank order

* i.e. inter-college range between highest and lowest %age

Attitude Item No.		College Number Highest								Lowest		Range %	chi square signif. %age p = <
3.	11	(98.3)	8	9	10	6	1	5	7	2	4	(71.9)	26.4	0.01
5.	10	(83.7)	1	4	6	9/11	7	5	8	2		(55.3)	28.4	2.5
7.	11	(94.1)	2	1	8	9	5	6	10	7	4	(39.6)	32.6	0.01
9.	8	(65.7)	2	1	7	6	11	10	4	5	9	(45.9)	19.8	NS
10.	11	(87.3)	8	9	1	6	4	5	10	7	2	(70.7)	16.6	NS
14.	11	(83.1)	9	10	2	6/7	8	4	5	1		(72.2)	10.9	NS
15.	11	(86.0)	1	2	5	8	4	9	7	6	10	(70.3)	15.7	NS
17.	10	(76.6)	11	1	5	2	8	9	6	7	4	(58.1)	18.5	NS
18.	2	(63.3)	9	11	10	1	5	8	6	4	7	(39.6)	23.7	NS
20.	2	(88.9)	6	11	7/8	5	1	10	9	4		(72.5)	16.4	NS

Table 7.12: Part-time student attitudes: negative items, percentage disagreement by college, in rank order

The eight items for which there were significant inter-college differences included all those designed to assess students views on general atmosphere of the college, and the extent to which students were treated as adults, as well as one of the two items on social relationships with students. There were no significant differences on items designed to measure views on social relations with staff, college work, and factors relating to part-time students in particular (items (d) - (h) in Table 7.3). Thus it would seem that inter-college differences in part-time student perspectives related in particular to the general ethos of college life, the way in which students felt that they were treated and were able to make friends, rather than work- or staff-related aspects of college. This contrasts with the full-time group, which showed statistically significant inter-college differences on a much wider spectrum of aspects of college life including work- and staff-related factors.

However, there were interesting similarities between the two groups as regards the colleges most frequently showing the highest and lowest percentage of positive views - as indicated by agreement with positive items and disagreement with negative ones. Analysis of the colleges' rank order in Tables 7.11 and 7.12 showed that the colleges most frequently ranking highest were numbers 9, 11 and 10. Those colleges in a similar position on the results of the full-time sample were numbers 1, 9 and 10, (see Chapter 6.5.8). Similarly those colleges most frequently ranking lowest for part-time respondents were numbers 4, 2 and 7, and for full-time respondents, numbers 2 and 4. Neither high ranking nor low ranking colleges show homogeneity with respect to geographical location (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1). Colleges 1 and 11 were in the south west, Colleges 9 and 4 in the south east, College 2 in the midlands, College 10 in the north west, and College 7 in Wales. It would therefore seem that regional differences did not have an impact on comparative levels of student satisfaction with their colleges.

This is, of course, a very crude indicator of comparative levels of student satisfaction with respect to general attitudes towards college. However, it does indicate broadly similar inter-college differences in levels of satisfaction between full and part-time

students with respect to particular colleges, and would tend to suggest that, despite differences in attendance mode between the two groups, students' experiences of these colleges, as assessed by the general attitude statements, had some broad similarities. Hence, it might be tentatively concluded that the factors relating to the ethos and culture of individual colleges suggested in Chapter 6.5.8 may have had an important impact on the perceptions of all groups of students, both full and part-time. These suggested factors were : the role of the principal, the college's organizational saga (Clark, 1983), and the nature of the student population in each college. The question of inter-college differences and influences that may help to account for these disparities are considered further in Chapter 8.1 in the context of a summary of the overall findings of the study.

7.6 Summary

Overall, with respect to question (d), the extent to which students shared the official view of their colleges, part-time student perspectives, on the whole, tended to support the colleges' contention that students were able to select an individual programme of studies relevant to their needs. Nearly 90% were taking their first choice of course/subjects. About a third were taking subjects they did not wish to, and nearly a third were not taking subjects they would like to study. However, the reasons in both cases were linked largely to employer requirements and externally prescribed course syllabuses, rather than factors within the control of the colleges. As regards the general atmosphere of their colleges, part-time students tended to express rather less positive views than the full-time group. Part-time student responses also showed quite large proportions of 'don't know' answers on several items, probably indicating less strongly held views about college in general, and a perception that many aspects of college life were less relevant to part-time students.

As regards question (e) on the integrative aspects of tertiary colleges, part-time student views provided little support for the extended comprehensiveness claim that the colleges

promoted social integration between part-time and full-time students. The part-time group showed very little evidence of involvement in social and extra curricular aspects of college life. Nearly two thirds of the group mixed largely with friends outside college, and over 80% perceived little or no opportunity to meet students on other courses. Both part-time and full-time student views suggested some support for the further development of opportunities to meet students on other courses. Just over a quarter of both groups would have welcomed such opportunities. On the other hand, most students expressed ambivalent ('don't know') or negative views on this issue, suggesting a lack of support for greater integration among the majority of students.

On question (f), pastoral care and guidance, part-time student responses suggested that despite the colleges' efforts on this area of provision, about a third of students would have welcomed greater help with transition to college and course choice. Larger proportions would have liked more guidance on work and progress and careers. On the other hand, over 70% felt that they were known personally by at least one member of staff. However, like the full-time group (and in contrast to the generally positive staff evaluation of this area of provision), part-time student views indicated a substantial demand for more pastoral guidance.

With respect to research question (g), college size did not seem to have a substantial impact on part-time student perspectives. However, there were rather surprisingly large disparities between subgroups of students in relation to gender, year group, type of course, and attendance mode. On the whole, female students, those in their first year at college, and studying non-vocational courses, and those not sponsored by employers, tended to have more positive attitudes. This highlights the unintended and unrecognized effects of organization policy and practice, and the differential impact that organizations may have on differing client groups, noted in Chapter 6.6

There were differences between colleges, but these were less marked than findings for

the full-time group, and less likely to be statistically significant. On the other hand, there were interesting similarities between the two groups with reference to the colleges most frequently showing the highest and lowest percentages of positive views. This would suggest that factors relating to the ethos of the colleges concerned may have played an important part in influencing student attitudes.

Overall, part-time student perspectives suggest that their attitudes towards college were strongly instrumental, and that they saw themselves as somewhat detached from the college as a community. It must be remembered that some 87% of the sample group were in employment, mostly full-time. As Gleeson and Mardle (1980) point out:

> *'For the apprentice-student, the workplace represents the real basis of his [her] material existence. College represents an escape route, a ladder to potential promotion and higher wages. It is also seen to be a "perk", a day off from industrial reality'* (p. 124).

The broader goals of the tertiary colleges, particularly those linked to the more extended version of comprehensiveness, may have been difficult to achieve with organizational members who did not share these goals and did not see college as a central focus of their lives.

7.7 Student perspectives on their colleges

Looking at the results of the two student surveys as a whole, a number of key points can be identified in the light of the issues raised in Chapter 6.1. *First*, the generally positive attitudes of students to their work and the college atmosphere in general suggest that the college goals of providing programmes of studies to meet individual needs, and an appropriate organizational ethos for the 16-19 age group, were being met to a considerable extent. This applied particularly to the full-time group, and to a lesser

degree to part-time students. *Second*, the findings support the results of earlier research (King, 1976; Dean *et al.*, 1979), which indicated that students in colleges expressed generally positive views about their life and work in these organizations. Comparison of the findings of the study reported here with this earlier work suggests that students in *tertiary* colleges showed relatively high levels of satisfaction compared with those in school sixth forms and other types of college.

Third, student perspectives on their colleges indicate that, with the exception of pastoral provision, their 'felt needs' (Bradshaw, 1972) were being met to a considerable degree. It would seem that, in general, the colleges had managed to achieve an appropriate balance between a mature environment and maintaining careful supervision of students' work, and between the social control and social cohesion dimensions of organizational culture (Hargreaves, 1995).

Fourth, the findings have implications for the applicability of the various organizational perspectives discussed in Chapter 2.2. To some extent, the results support a rational system or formal approach to the analysis of organizational goals. These perspectives suggest that organizational goals are established by leaders and agreed to and pursued by organizational members. Planned goals are implemented in a rational and relatively straightforward fashion (Scott, 1987; Bush, 1995). Thus a number of the official goals of the colleges with respect to provision and ethos were being enacted from the perspectives of students.

On the other hand, in various respects, the findings support the suggestions about the limitations of rational system and formal models discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. There were a number of mismatches or disparities between the official view and the perspectives of students, and between goals as ideals and goals as enacted. Thus the extended comprehensiveness goals of mixed economy courses and social integration among students (particularly among full-time and part-time groups) were not being

achieved to any great extent.. These goals were 'loosely coupled' (Weick, 1976) with organizational activities and members' perspectives. Students showed limited evidence of sharing the principals' goals of encouraging greater social mixing as a vehicle for promoting parity of esteem. Similarly, despite the official endorsement of mixed economy courses, the study programmes of the sample group indicated that these courses were pursued to a very limited degree, and not at all in some colleges.

The area of pastoral provision showed a particularly marked 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between the purposes and perspectives of organizational leaders (endorsed by staff) and the views of the recipients of this provision. This applied to both part-time and full-time groups, highlighting the need to draw on alternatives to rational system and formal models in understanding organizational processes. At the time of the study in 1982, colleges providing for the post-16 age group in general paid little attention to examining the perceived guidance needs of students. This situation has changed considerably in recent years, partly as a result of greater emphasis on quality issues in education, particularly responsiveness to clients' or customers' needs (Bell, 1995). Total Quality Management (TQM) and similar approaches stress the central importance of providing a service to satisfy clients' needs, and developing quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that the service is meeting these needs (West-Burnham, 1992). Greater attention by colleges to these issues has been reinforced by FEFC requirements to provide verifiable proof of internal quality assessment of the service provided, and by the FEFC inspection framework, which includes the evaluation of colleges' provision for 'student recruitment, guidance and support' (FEFC, 1992, 1993).

The findings of considerable subgroup differences both within and between colleges also highlight the limitations of rational models of organizations. The wide disparity in student views points to the unplanned and unintended consequences of organizational policies. As noted in Chapter 6.6, although the colleges explicitly sought to provide parity of treatment for all 16-19 students, the results suggest that organizational goals

impact on various groups in different ways. They also indicate that organizations sharing similar goals may show wide differences in the extent to which these goals are achieved in the eyes of organizational members.

A *fifth* and final point raised by consideration of the two student surveys relates to organizational culture. Despite the integrationist culture espoused by the principals, the results suggest that various subgroups among both full- and part-time students shared the culture and values of their colleges to a lesser extent than other groups. This is an issue that needs further exploration. The Dean *et al.* (1979) and King (1976) studies provided no parallel material on student subgroups to enable comparison of the findings discussed here with the perspectives of student groups in other types of institution. It would be interesting to carry out similar attitude studies in other kinds of organization serving the 16-19 age range to see if there were similar wide inter-group disparities in student perspectives.

Less positive attitudes for many full-time students may have been linked with inability to find a job at a time of rising youth unemployment and hence some ambivalence about attending college. 17.9 percent of respondents gave 'couldn't find a job' as an important reason for staying on in education, and 20.3% agreed that 'I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job' (with 9.3% of 'don't know' answers to this item), rising to over a third of lower attaining students and of those on some vocational courses.

Work on student attitudes towards education suggests that lower attaining and male students may be more likely to have negative attitudes towards school, to resent school rules and regulations and reject school values (see Keys and Fernandes, 1993). There is also evidence to show that an important aspect of school/college effectiveness is to foster a sense of shared values among students and students and staff, countering the development of anti-organizational subgroups among students (Reynolds, 1992). This is not to suggest that the evidence from the student survey indicates the presence of anti-

college subcultures. Nonetheless, it does indicate that there may have been scope for the colleges to incorporate the student groups with less positive attitudes more closely into the dominant norms and values of the institution, encouraging them to share these values to a greater extent, by, for example, greater use of rewards and incentives for all forms of success including non-academic achievements, and strategies to involve them more closely in extra curricular activities and the life of the college generally (see Mortimore, 1993). It might be suggested that such strategies would be feasible with full-time students, but less so with the part-time group, given their 'semi-detached' relationship to their colleges. While the goal of integrating such students fully into the college community may have been something of an ideal, the differential levels of satisfaction among various part-time groups suggest that measures could have been taken to enhance the commitment to college of those with less positive attitudes. On the other hand, it should be recognized that, as discussed in Section 7.3, there may be attitudinal barriers in part-time student responses to such measures.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This chapter takes a progressively widening perspective on the issues explored in the tertiary colleges study, starting close to the data and then moving back to take a broader view in looking at the more general implications of the study for the development of new types of organization. First it presents a 'close up' view of the main findings of the research; Section 8.2 then goes on to consider these findings in the light of the six broad themes identified in Chapter 2.8. Section 8.3 then explores the implications of the research in the context of some of the policy issues involved in establishing new types of educational organization, comparing the development of the tertiary college with other new forms of provision. The study has focused on internal aspects of the colleges, though, as indicated at various points in the analysis, environmental factors may have had an important influence on their development. It may therefore be useful to consider the possibility of examining the development of organizations not just from the 'inside' from the perspectives of their members, but also from the 'outside in', focusing on the role of environmental factors in shaping what happens within organizations. It is suggested in Section 8.3 that 'new institutionalist' ideas, which portray the environment as having a central influence on organizational development, rather than a merely peripheral effect, may provide a useful framework for reinterpreting the findings of the study reported here, and for understanding organizational development more generally.

New institutionalist concepts provide an important corrective in particular to the assumptions of rational system and formal models that organizations have a relatively high degree of autonomy in establishing and pursuing internally generated goals. These concepts also challenge the tendency of other organizational perspectives to emphasis internal rather than external dimensions in explaining organizational processes. The report concludes with a summary of issues from the research that are worthy of further investigation.

8.1 Summary of findings

The 'official' view

The first set of research questions explored by the study were as follows:

(a) What were the official goals of the colleges, as expressed by principals, vice principals and college documents?

(b) What forms of organization structure had been adopted to pursue these goals?

(c) Did principals claim that the colleges had a distinctive 'tertiary' ethos?

These three questions were concerned with the 'official' view of the colleges: their philosophy and approach as put forward by institutional leaders.

Goals and ethos

The official goals of the tertiary colleges were concerned with extending comprehensive principles to provision for the post-16 age group, following and building on the comprehensivisation of secondary schooling. Principals and college documents made frequent references to 'comprehensive principles' but these were not precisely defined or explored in much depth. Comprehensive principles tended to be taken for granted as a self evident 'good thing' without unpacking the concepts and issues involved.

Contrary to the assumptions of rational system models (Scott, 1987), it would seem that organizational goals, rather than being tightly specified, may be diffuse and expressed in broad terms. This is perhaps not surprising in the case of the tertiary college, as there was no clear definition of what 'comprehensive principles' entailed either for schools or

colleges. In contrast to City Technology Colleges (CTCs), the setting up of the tertiary colleges was not accompanied by any official guidance on what they should seek to achieve. As Benn and Chitty (1996) point out:

> *'The definition of comprehensive education has always been elusive ... Despite the fact that in large areas of Britain comprehensive education has established itself as the de facto system, developing upward through the [tertiary] colleges, it is still a system without any clear definition, official or otherwise'* (pp. 26-7).

Interviews with principals and analysis of college documents suggested that two rather different notions of 'comprehensive' were evident in the philosophy of the tertiary colleges (see Chapter 4.3). On the one hand, there was what has been characterized as an 'extended' or egalitarian version of comprehensivisation, stressing parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes, and cultural integration of organizational members. This version of comprehensive education is based on a view of education as helping to bring about a fairer and more just society, where all its members are seen to be of equal worth (Ford, 1969; Benn and Chitty, 1996).

On the other hand, there was evidence of a more limited or meritocratic approach to comprehensive education, stressing equality of opportunity for all, and the provision of appropriate courses to meet the needs, interests and abilities of each individual student, to enable him/her to achieve their full potential. The official goals of the tertiary colleges were informed by elements of both versions of comprehensivisation. In individual colleges, institutional leaders and college documents put forward a mixture of both versions; it was not possible to make a simple distinction between colleges pursuing egalitarian and meritocratic versions. In discussing institutional goals and objectives in interview, principals and senior staff tended to be cautious about the extent to which the more extended version could be achieved in practice.

Principals recognized that some of the more egalitarian goals of the colleges, such as social integration between full and part-time students, could not be achieved in the short term. Similar reservations were expressed about mixed economy courses; while some colleges encouraged these, the majority recognized them as longer term goals to be developed when employers and HE institutions looked more favourably on a mix of academic and vocational curricular elements. This would suggest that goals, especially for new organizations, represent long-term ideals or aspirations (Hoyle, 1986) rather than blueprints setting out short term targets that can be achieved easily or quickly. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, to assume that there is a clear link between planning goals and implementing them is to indulge in 'wishful thinking' (Wise, 1977) or 'brute sanity' (Fullan, 1989).

As the colleges were a relatively small group of new and experimented organizations, lacking central government sponsorship and definition of their role, the principals of the early tertiary colleges had to establish a mission for the colleges, to gain understanding and acceptance of their purposes and future direction in the eyes of internal and external audiences. The principals of the earliest established colleges (those examined in the study) had considerable autonomy in developing the goals of this new form of organization. Eight of the principals of the surveyed colleges had been responsible for establishing their colleges as tertiary institutions, and described their role in developing a mission in terms similar to those used by Schein (1985) to characterize 'founder leaders'. These principals expressed a clear commitment to developing comprehensive education post-16 and strong personal identification with their 'own' colleges. Principals worked individually and also as a group to develop tertiary college goals. Their informal professional body, the Tertiary Colleges Panel (later Association) was seen as an important forum for debating and developing a collective mission. Until the early 1980s there were relatively few tertiary colleges so the Panel comprised a fairly small group of principals, who sought to establish a philosophy and approach for a relatively 'wild' (Carlson, 1975) and vulnerable new type of organization. As Selznick's (1957)

characterization of mission suggests, the external dimension (i.e. ensuring the survival of the organization in its environment) is as important as the internal dimension (i.e. ensuring the understanding and commitment of organizational members).

Principals' descriptions of college goals and broader mission showed a strong awareness of external factors, the circumstances of the early development of each college, and the need to gain public acceptance and support for the colleges' role. Their concern to take external expectations into account suggests that they recognized the importance of Gross' (1969) adaptation and positional goals (see Chapter 2.2). As Gross points out, such goals are often implicit, rather than overtly expressed as official organizational purposes.

The principals were particularly keen to avoid the ideological divisions, and often acrimony, which had accompanied the earlier secondary comprehensive reorganization in many areas, and which were aroused in particular by the closure of grammar schools. They stressed the importance of taking a gradualist and evolutionary approach to the development of comprehensivisation post-16, which sought to avoid ideological divisions and making over-large claims which the colleges would find difficult to fulfil, and to demonstrate that the tertiary colleges combined the best of FE and sixth form provision while avoiding the problems raised by each.

This evolutionary approach, and the cautiousness about how far the extended version of comprehensiveness was feasible in the light of external expectations, suggest that the official goals of the colleges were mediated by a strong awareness of the public image of the colleges. This highlights the important part which may be played by the environment in influencing, and indeed, shaping organizational goals. While rational models of institutional goal-setting suggest that organizations have a considerable degree of autonomy in establishing and pursuing their own priorities (Scott, 1987), 'non-rational' perspectives acknowledge the importance of influences and constraints on organizational goals exerted by the external environment (Patterson *et al.*, 1986, see Chapter 2.5 above).

These perspective suggest that far from remaining passive while organizational decisions are made internally, the environment maintains an active level of involvement in organizational matters, and challenges the power of those within the organization. Thus while principals had considerable scope and power internally to shape the direction and purposes of the colleges, these purposes may have been considerably influenced by environmental factors.

Following on from the colleges' role in extending comprehensive education to the post-16 age group, senior staff claimed that the colleges had developed a distinctive culture which was reflected in the colleges' atmosphere or ethos: *'the tertiary ways of doing things are distinct, signalling a clear educational and social ethos'* (Moseley, 1985, p. 70). Similarly, Janes and Miles (1978) noted that *'The tertiary college has the opportunity of developing its own distinctive ethos and new approaches in education'* (p. 2). Principals argued that the distinctive ethos of the colleges derived from combining under one roof all post 16 education and training provision, staff and students, and from taking steps to combine carefully the best features of sixth forms and FE colleges in structures and provision, to produce 'a tertiary synthesis' (Ballard, 1985, p. 60).

The main factors which were argued to contribute to this distinctive ethos were: the rethinking and redesign of organization structures to demonstrate that the tertiary college was a new type of institution, not merely an FE college with sixth form work tacked on; opportunities for each student to choose an individual programme of studies suited to her/his individual needs; the breaking down of barriers between academic and vocational areas of study, staff and students by bringing them together in one institution; opportunities for social integration among students and staff from different areas of study; and careful attention to pastoral provision. Principals noted that the ethos of the tertiary colleges gave weight to students' expressive as well as instrumental needs. In addition to attempting to provide individual programmes of study, the colleges sought to contribute to students' personal and social development by providing a wide range of

extra curricular activities and opportunities to meet a wide range of other students and staff. The diversity of people and provision, as compared with other types of institution, it was argued, contributed to a distinctive ethos which had educational and social benefits for students.

Institutional leaders sought to promote an adult or mature ethos. At the same time, it was argued that this needed to be balanced by attention to the guidance and supervision needs of the 16-19 age group. It was suggested that in this way the ethos of the colleges integrated instrumental dimensions, typical of FE colleges, and expressive dimensions, typical of school sixth forms. These dimensions parallel the two domains of organizational life in Hargreaves' (1995) typology of cultures (see Chapter 2.4 above). Hargreaves argues that educational organizations need to balance the 'instrumental-social control' domain relating to task achievement, and the 'expressive-social cohesion' domain concerned with social relationships. This may be particularly difficult in organizations like tertiary colleges catering for the 16-19 age group, since students may interpret social control norms very differently from staff and may resist what they see as an undue emphasis on the control and regulation of their work and wider activities in college.

Organization structures

In order to develop the goals and ethos of the colleges, senior staff argued that it was important to rethink pre-existing internal organization structures and develop new ones. This it was argued would demonstrate to staff and students that the tertiary college was a new type of organization, not merely a merger of an FE college and school sixth forms. It was felt that structures had an important influence on attitudes and that new structures would act as a change agent to help to reduce, if not completely eliminate, 'them and us' attitudes among ex-school and ex-FE staff, despite their very different ideologies, traditions and professional norms. *'Structure determines the attitudes of those who work within its confines ... The structure of a new tertiary college is a major factor affecting*

the attitudes of its staff and it can therefore be a major agent in managing change' (Janes, 1985a, p. 81).

While principals agreed that new or revised structures played an important part in compelling staff to rethink pre-existing values, attitudes and practices, they differed on the type of structure most appropriate for tertiary colleges. Some principals had adapted a traditional FE department system with modifications, usually including centralized arrangements for admissions and guidance on course choice, strengthened pastoral care structures, and common cross-college timetabling arrangements. These principals argued that, with strong central controls and cross-college structures, departments did not operate as separate and competing empires, and that the strengths of a departmental system, in terms of clear lines of communication and responsibility, outweighed its weaknesses.

Four of the colleges in the study had adopted a matrix form of organization, arguing that this was an important way of working towards the educational and social integration goals of the colleges, by contrast with a departmental system which was seen as promoting a segmented and separatist approach: *'the centrifugal tendencies of further-education style departments would endanger the comprehensive principles of tertiary education'* (Ballard, 1980, p. 43). A matrix system was seen to promote a 'whole college' rather than sub-unit perspective and approach, and to enable wider staff involvement in decision making, hence encouraging organizational cohesion and integration. Of course, as the FESC (1989) survey indicated (see Chapter 2.4 above), many further education colleges experimented with matrix forms of organization because they were seen to promote greater flexibility, innovation and lateral cross-college links. For the tertiary colleges that adopted matrix organizations, this structure had a deeper and more symbolic significance, reinforcing the message that the tertiary college was a new type of institution, and, it was argued, acting as an impetus to the development of changed attitudes and new ways of working.

The perspectives of staff and students

The second set of research questions was concerned with the perspectives of organizational members - staff and full- and part-time students. How far did they endorse the official view of the colleges that was put forward by senior managers? These research questions were as follows:

(d) how far did staff and students share the official view of the goals, distinctive approach and organization of the colleges discussed above?

(e) what degree of integration and shared perspective did staff and students perceive between academic/vocational and full/part time areas of work, staff and students?

(f) how far did they perceive pastoral care arrangements for students to be effective?

(g) how far were particular forms of organization and college size linked with differences in (d) - (f) above?

Goals and ethos

Staff in general showed limited support for the official goals of the colleges as set out by principals and official documents. Their views cast doubt on the rational model's portrayal of organizational goals as 'blueprints', established by leaders and shared and collectively pursued by organizational members. Staff perspectives indicated that they felt their colleges were achieving, at least to some extent, the more limited goals of providing individual course programmes, appropriate pastoral care and some degree of social mixing among students. However, their responses showed very limited agreement with the more extended comprehensiveness goals espoused in the principals' mission for the tertiary colleges. In this respect, the findings on staff views endorse the findings of

other studies (Peeke, 1994; Drodge and Cooper, 1997; see Chapter 2.3 above) that a shared corporate mission may be problematic in complex organizations.

Full time students shared the goals of the colleges concerned with meeting individual students' needs, insofar as they expressed broadly positive views on their own course programmes. However they showed lower levels of satisfaction with non-examined areas of the curriculum, particularly general studies. Analysis of students' programmes of study showed little evidence that the goal of providing mixed economy courses, suggested by Barrow (1990) as a 'defining feature' of tertiary colleges, was being pursued to any great extent. In the majority of colleges, very low proportions of the sample were studying mixed economy courses. Part time students also shared the goals of the colleges in expressing high levels of satisfaction with their course programmes, though again their views were less positive on the general studies area of the curriculum.

As regards the distinctive approach and ethos of the colleges, over two thirds of staff reported that their colleges enabled students to choose programmes suited to their individual needs and enabled social mixing to take place among full time students. Rather lower proportions felt that their colleges promoted mixed economy courses and social mixing between full and part time students. With the exception of individual course programmes, staff in larger colleges were less likely to report that their colleges provided these distinctive features. Staff views on tertiary college distinctiveness were also explored by asking respondents to identify the main benefits and limitations of the colleges as compared with other types of post-16 educational institution. Only a small proportion of responses on the benefits of teaching in a tertiary college referred specifically to ideological and philosophical factors relating to comprehensive education. A much larger proportion of answers referred to the wide diversity within the college in terms of the range of students, staff and teaching opportunities, and the stimulus that these provided.

These factors are not peculiar to the tertiary college, but can be seen as offered by this form of organization to a greater degree than others, since it provides the full range of provision for the area which it serves. Perceived drawbacks of the colleges for staff related largely to organizational and administrative factors, and size; again not factors specific to tertiary colleges. For staff who had joined their college post-tertiary reorganization, less than a third indicated that its *tertiary* role had played an influential part in their decision to apply for a post there. Overall, staff views on the distinctive approach of the colleges were rather mixed. While some staff saw the colleges as offering a distinctive form of provision, in other respects staff perspectives reflected factors which might be found in other types of organization, though perhaps to a differing extent, and there was a lack of the clear delineation of distinctive elements, and commitment to them, that were evident in principals' and vice principals' perspectives.

With respect to students' perspectives on the distinctiveness of the colleges, they had no basis of personal experience for comparing the tertiary college with other types of post-16 provision. The study therefore focused on their views on the atmosphere or ethos of the organization. Since the colleges aimed to provide an environment to meet the educational and social needs of the 16+ age group, students' levels of satisfaction with the college environment would provide an important measure of how far the colleges had succeeded in this aim. The colleges aimed to provide an integrated community with no barriers between different student groups, so one would expect students to perceive a positive college atmosphere where they felt part of the college community.

Full time students in general expressed positive attitudes about the atmosphere and ways of life in their colleges, suggesting that the colleges had been relatively successful in achieving an appropriate balance between autonomy and control in provision for students. Over a quarter of the 'good points' of college identified by students related to its general atmosphere or ethos, and over two thirds of students felt that they were better off or at least 'about the same' as they would be in a school sixth form. These generally

positive results reinforce the findings of earlier studies (Dean *et al.*, 1979; King, 1976) which found that in general students in tertiary colleges showed relatively high levels of satisfaction.

Part time students on the whole expressed rather less positive views on the atmosphere of their colleges. They also showed higher proportions of 'don't know' answers, suggesting an absence of strong views about the college environment and a greater degree of ambivalence toward college than full time students. The majority of the part-time student's week is spent in the workplace or elsewhere away from college so some degree of ambivalence about the college environment is not unexpected. However, though less positive that full-timers' views, part-time students expressed broad levels of satisfaction with college life, and over two thirds disagreed with the questionnaire statement that part-time students were not important to their colleges. These findings would suggest that, at least to some degree, part-time students did see themselves as forming part of the college community.

Organization structures

Since principals and senior staff argued that organization structures were influential in developing new attitudes and approaches appropriate to a new kind of organization, it was important to ask organizational members about this. As discussed earlier, principals of the tertiary colleges argued that the organization structures they had adopted had been carefully thought out and developed to meet the goals and needs of the colleges involved. They took different views on the appropriate structure with a broad division between those choosing a departmental and a matrix system.

Notwithstanding the principals' claims that their organization systems had been carefully designed to meet college needs, staff perspectives generally reflected rather negative views on organization systems generally in both matrix and departmentally organized

colleges. Studies of FE colleges have found rather low levels of staff satisfaction with management structures, which are often perceived as ponderous, slow and bureaucratic (Bradley and Silverleaf, 1979). As Fidler (1997) points out organizational structures and systems are often seen to be unsatisfactory because they have remained unchanged for years as a result of organizational inertia, even when the original purposes for such structures no longer exist. However, in relatively new organizations, where systems have been recently and specifically devised to meet organizational purposes, one might expect more positive views. There was some tendency for staff in smaller colleges to express higher levels of satisfaction, suggesting that larger colleges may have particular difficulties in this respect.

As discussed in Chapter 2.5, participation in decision making tends to encourage staff commitment to organizational purposes and to organizational development and improvement (Fullan, 1991; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; NCE, 1996). Staff views showed a considerable demand for more decision involvement at both subunit level and, particularly, at institutional level. This would tend to suggest that opportunities for promoting staff commitment to organizational goals by means of participatory ways of working were not being fully exploited by the colleges.

Principals of matrix-structured colleges claimed that this form of organization offered particular strengths, not just in enabling larger proportions of staff to participate in decisions, but also in terms of working towards goals of integration, flexibility to offer individual course programmes, lateral communications and opportunities to innovate. Despite these claims there were almost no significant differences between staff in colleges with matrix structures and departmental structures with respect to any of the areas of organization and participation in decision-making explored in the study. One of the matrix organized colleges (no. 3) showed rather high levels of satisfaction on most areas, and another (no. 4) rather low levels. These findings would tend to suggest that, despite the faith often placed by organizational analysts and managers in restructuring

and reorganising, particular types of organizational structure may make little difference to staff attitudes. What may be more important are the inter-personal and informal aspects of organization and the way structures are perceived and interpreted, rather than formal structures per se (Greenfield, 1973; Fullan, 1991).

These results also suggest that far from helping to change staff attitudes, and acting as vehicles for the management of change, as the principals expected, and as rational models would suggest, organization structures acted as dissatisfiers at least for some staff - while this is not to suggest that they actually inhibited change, they represented areas of discontent and low levels of satisfaction for some staff, in contrast with teachers' rather more positive attitudes to other aspects of college life. Overall, whatever form of organization they worked within, staff did not see the organizational structure as providing strong support for working towards the college's goals. These findings would suggest the need to explore: (i) the meanings attributed to organizational structures by those who work within them, which may be very different from the meanings of those who established these structures; (ii) the perceived relationship between organizational structures and goals - as 'non rational' organizational analyses indicate, these may be loosely rather than tightly coupled (see Weick, 1976; Patterson *et al.*, 1986). These issues are addressed in Section 8.2.

Integration

The official view of the colleges suggested that rather than operating as two separate areas of work, academic and vocational elements were, at least to some degree, integrated and that the colleges formed unified organizations which had broken down the pre-existing barriers between these two areas. Overall, staff perspectives on this issue showed rather low levels of contact and integration with staff in other departments or subunits. Despite the suggestion that matrix organization structures helped to promote cross- college working, there were no significant differences in staff views between the

two types of structure, nor between larger and smaller colleges. A considerable proportion of staff would have preferred more contact with other areas, suggesting that the scope for encouraging cross-college working could have been pursued to a greater extent (see Section 8.2).

As discussed in Chapter 2.4, ex-school staff, teaching mainly academic areas of the curriculum, and ex-FE staff, teaching mainly vocational courses, could be expected to have very different attitudes, drawn from the traditions and values of the institutions in which they had previously taught (King, 1976). However, since all the colleges surveyed had been operating as tertiary colleges for at least 5 years, some coming together and merging of the two disparate sets of values might be expected. Some degree of co-operation and integration of the two groups would seem an essential pre-requisite for meeting the colleges' aims of breaking down academic/vocational barriers and achieving a whole-college perspective, rather than operating a as two separate subunits.

Staff were therefore asked to assess the degree of integration between GCE and vocational areas of work, and between the two groups of staff. For GCE/vocational areas of work, less than half of staff reported at least a fair amount of integration. There were no significant differences between matrix and departmentally organized colleges, though those in larger colleges were less likely to perceive at least a fair amount of integration. As regards integration between ex-school and ex-FE staff, only just over half the sample reported at least a fair amount, with those in larger colleges again more likely to report lower levels. Despite the integrationist claims made about matrix systems, those in colleges with this form of organization were *less* likely to report at least a fair amount of integration. This may be because matrix systems group staff into a relatively large number of separate teaching teams, whereas departments are usually larger, more heterogeneous groupings which bring together staff teaching a wide range of courses.

Overall, then, there was not a great deal of integration, as perceived by respondents, between these two curricular areas and groups of staff, despite the fact that the colleges had been established as tertiary institutions for a number of years. Changes of attitude do not appear to have become embedded to any large degree, notwithstanding the colleges' professed aim to bring this about. This points to the persistence of norms, values and ideologies based on pre-existing traditions and ways of working. The professional socialisation and norms of school and FE teachers are very different, and the deep separation between academic and vocational areas is embedded in British education traditions (Maclure, 1991), and is reinforced by attitudes and expectation in society at large. Given these factors, it may be unrealistic to expect structural change, by means of institutional reorganization, to bring about rapid changes in subcultural attitudes, understandings and agendas. Notwithstanding structural changes, it is difficult to bring about educational innovation aimed at integrating different groups where the meanings and subjective realities of the groups and individuals involved are widely disparate. (Fullan, 1991; Meyerson and Martin, 1987).

Students' perspectives on the question of college-wide integration were examined by assessing the extent to which they welcomed and took part in opportunities for social mixing in extra-curricular activities and with students on other courses. Reported levels of participation in extra-curricular activities and the students' union were rather low, particularly for the part-time sample. This suggests that the official view of the colleges' wider opportunities for personal and social development beyond the taught curriculum were not being translated into practice in terms of wide-scale student participation in these opportunities. Full-time students showed some evidence of social mixing during the college day and some demand for more opportunities for doing so. However among the part-time group, the majority, not unexpectedly, socialized largely with friends from outside college, and saw little opportunity for mixing with students on other courses. On this issue, student responses mirrored those of staff, who in general reported that their colleges provided rather limited opportunities for mixing between the full and part-time

student groups. As the principals themselves acknowledged, while this more extended comprehensive goal was desirable, given the limited involvement of part-time students in the day-to-day life of college, it was difficult to promote in practice.

Pastoral care and guidance

Research question (f) was concerned with pastoral provision for students, an important issue for the colleges since their critics (particularly defenders of the school sixth form) argued that this aspect of provision was likely to be inadequate in tertiary colleges. These critics suggested that the colleges provided too much freedom for 16-19 students, and lacked the strong pastoral element of the sixth form, based on a close staff knowledge and understanding of student needs, built up over the years of the student's school career (see Chapter 1). The official view within the tertiary colleges was that this area of provision had received careful attention and that the colleges had taken particular steps to meet the pastoral and guidance needs of the 16-19 age group.

Staff in general endorsed the principals' perspectives on this issue. A large proportion of staff reported provision as very satisfactory in each area of pastoral care examined: transition to college, and guidance on personal matters, work and progress and careers. The perspectives of both full- and part-time students, the recipients of guidance provision, were very different. Both groups indicated a considerable demand for more guidance in all four areas. These results suggest that despite the claims of principals and staff about the effectiveness of student guidance arrangements, there was a considerable mismatch between the perspective of providers and recipients with respect to this issue. In Bradshaw's (1972) terms (see Chapter 2.8), the 'felt needs' of students were at odds with their 'normative needs' as defined by staff. It would seem that organizations' normative decisions about student needs should take into account the felt needs of clients if they are to provide a service which is perceived to be satisfactory by the clients themselves (Goldring, 1995). The successful implementation of innovation requires

consideration of the perceived needs and subjective realities of the recipients of the change. At the time of the study, the tertiary colleges and, indeed, educational organizations generally, did not address the issue of clients' perceived needs in any depth. This position has now changed somewhat, with the advent of a quasi-market context for both schools and colleges, accompanied by a greater emphasis on meeting the needs of clients or 'customers', brought about in the UK by the legislative changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Bell, 1995).

Sub-group differences

The final research question was concerned with the extent to which there were differing levels of satisfaction with the colleges between different groups of staff and students, and whether such differing perspectives were linked to factors such as college size and organization structure. Principals pointed to the importance of organization structure in influencing and changing attitudes. Those who had adopted matrix systems suggested that this form of organization provided an important means towards achieving tertiary college goals. Other principals argued the merits of a modified departmental structure. Despite this, there was no clear pattern of higher or lower levels of staff satisfaction in colleges with either form of organization. It would, therefore, seem that structure *per se* is less important than the way in which it is operated and perceived by staff; subjective and interpersonal factors beyond the scope of the study may have been important here, such as management style, the history of each college's development, and the personalities involved (see below). College *size*, however, did seem to have some influence on staff views. There was a tendency for staff in larger colleges to have less positive views on a number of the issues explored.

As regards student perspectives, full-time student attitudes, in general, were quite positive towards most aspects of college life, with the exception of pastoral provision. Part-time students on the whole showed rather lower levels of satisfaction. There were

significant differences in the perspectives of student subgroups among both full-time and part-time samples. Among full-time students, broadly speaking, the following subgroups tended to have less favourable and positive attitudes towards their colleges: males, first years, those following vocational, non-GCE/A level courses, those of lower prior attainment, and those in larger colleges. For part-time students in general, the following groups tended to hold less positive attitudes: males, those in their second/third year at college, those studying vocational courses and those sponsored by employers.

These results highlight the unintended and unexpected differences in impact that organizational policies and practices may have on different subgroups of clients. As noted in Chapter 6.6, it was not the colleges' intention that different groups of students would experience differing levels of satisfaction with college life. Rather, the colleges sought to meet the individual needs of students in all these groups, providing parity of treatment. Various studies have shown large differences in the effects of schools on different groups of students, in both cognitive and affective areas (see e.g. Goldstein *et al.*, 1993; Sammons *et al.*, 1993; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989). There would seem to be a need for educational organizations to explore the reasons for, and ways of reducing, the differential impact of their provision on different student groups, if they are to provide effectively for the needs of all clients. This may be a particular issue for organizations like tertiary colleges which provide for a particularly wide and heterogeneous clientele.

Finally, there were wide disparities between *individual* colleges on a large number of the issues explored, for both staff and students. In general, staff in College 3 tended to express rather higher than average levels of satisfaction, and those in College 4 rather lower than average levels. Among full-time students, those in Colleges 1, 9 and 10 were rather more likely to express positive views, and those in Colleges 2 and 4 to report lower levels of satisfaction. Among part-time students, Colleges 9, 11 and 10 were more likely to be seen in positive terms, and Colleges 4, 2 and 7 in a less favourable light.

As noted earlier, it is likely that a complex range of inter-related factors contributed to those inter-college differences. Exploration of these factors was beyond the scope of the study, but one might speculate about the issues that may have been involved. Size may have played a part. Thus for example College 3 was the smallest college in the study and College 4 one of the largest. Staff and students may see smaller organizations as more congenial and less complex and bureaucratic (Bush, 1995). Although it was not possible in the research study to conduct an analysis of the leadership roles and management styles of principals and other senior staff, analyses of the importance of leadership in organizational effectiveness (see e.g. Beare *et al.*, 1989) would strongly suggest that this factor probably played a major part in influencing staff and student perceptions. Leadership is particularly important in new organizations, in establishing and shaping institutional mission and culture and gaining the shared commitment of organizational members to organizational goals (Senge, 1990; Schein, 1985).

The length of time particular colleges had been operating as tertiary institutions may also have played a part. College 4 had been a tertiary college for five years at the time of the study, while others had been established for a longer period of time. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, educational change, especially when it involves large-scale reorganization, takes many years to become embedded and institutionalized: *'The total time frame from initiation to institutionalisation is lengthy; even moderately complex changes take from three to five years, while major restructuring efforts can take five or ten years'* (Fullan, 1991, p. 49).

Another set of factors which may have contributed to the wide inter-college difference in perspectives may have been concerned with what Clark (1983) calls the 'organisational saga', i.e. the particular sets of human and organizational circumstances surrounding the establishment and historical development of each institution. In this case, such factors might include the extent to which reorganization had been carried out easily, or was a more long term and complex process, and the extent to which staff felt that the allocation

of responsibilities in the new college recognized their own needs and status. Again, examination of these individual historical circumstances was beyond the scope of the study. However, some general issues relating to the organizational saga may have had an impact on staff and student attitudes. Thus, for example, College 9, unlike the other colleges in the sample, had been established as a purpose-built tertiary college. As indicated above, both full and part-time students showed relatively high levels of satisfaction with this college, and staff views also tended to be more positive than in many other colleges. College 9 incorporated the sixth form of the local grammar school, and the headteacher of this school became the new college principal. There was no pre-existing FE college involved; vocational courses were started from scratch in the new college. Thus, unlike many of the other colleges, College 9 had appropriate accommodation and no problems of multiple sites. There may also have been fewer difficulties in merging staff from pre-existing institutions, with the potential for the persistence of 'them and us' attitudes, than there may have been in cases where reorganization had involved combining several sixth forms and an FE college. As the CEO of College 9's LEA pointed out in interview: *'there was a happy combination of local circumstances ... which gave it (the college) a particularly fair and favourable wind ...'*. College 4, where both staff and student views were less positive, had been involved in two large-scale reorganizations, first as part of a sixth form college system, and later as a tertiary college; some higher level courses and their teaching staff had also been transferred to another college. As Janes (1985b, p. 16) points out *'Staff undergo considerable stress when [tertiary] reorganisation takes place'*. The disruption and instability involved may have had some continuing effect on staff attitudes, contributing to an organizational culture which may also have impacted on students' perspectives, thus contributing to their relatively less positive views. Hargreaves (1995) suggests that the dominant organizational culture among staff 'trickles down' to impact on students' attitudes. Similarly, College 2, at the time of the study, had recently undergone internal

reorganization, which again may have influenced staff perspectives and hence student views and institutional ethos.

A final factor which may have contributed to the disparities in organizational members' views, particularly those of students, is the extent to which the colleges provided for the full range of the 16-19 age group in the areas they served. Those colleges located in smaller centres of population, e.g. market towns with a large rural catchment area, did largely provide for the whole of the age group, apart from those in the independent sector. Colleges serving larger towns, however, co-existed with other forms of 16-19 institution. Thus for example College 2 was tertiary in only part of its catchment area. The other part was also served by an 11-18 school, which may have 'creamed off' some more able and possibly more motivated students to its sixth form, thus affecting the intake range of the students entering the tertiary college. College 4 was also located in a larger centre of population with several school sixth forms within travelling distance, so it is possible that some students within its catchment area had opted to attend a sixth form.

Overall, the differences in staff and student views between the various colleges highlight the uniqueness and individuality of each organization. While organizations of a particular type are in many ways similar, in other ways they are quite different, because of the complex range of particular local factors and circumstances, both internal and external, that shape their development. To explore the particular circumstances which make every organization unique, in-depth case studies, over time, are needed. Detailed case studies, however by their nature are unable to provide the 'broader picture' (Johnson, 1994). Conversely, larger scale surveys, such as the study reported here, have the weakness that they neglect the in-depth exploration of organizations as social groupings, but the strength that they provide a broad picture of the general characteristics of a group of organizations, and therefore provide a basis for theorising about the characteristics and dynamics that can inform the detailed cases (Bennett, 1997).

Despite inter-college and inter-group differences, the findings of this study have shown that the colleges were achieving some degree of success with respect to their more limited comprehensive goals, if not the more extended ones. Staff and student views were broadly positive on most aspects of provision, particularly among full-time students. These results are consistent with the findings of the HMI report (1989) on tertiary colleges. This report, based on an inspection of ten colleges, found that their provision was generally satisfactory, and that examination pass rates for vocational courses 'compared favourably' with national averages. A level pass rates were a little lower than national levels but higher than those for FE colleges (HMI, 1989, pp. 26-7). The report concluded that, in general, the colleges *'offer a comprehensive range of courses and provision ... [and] provide students with a congenial environment in which they are well - taught and where they can achieve good examination results. These colleges are successful in meeting their students' needs ...'* (p. 43).

The preceding analysis has focused on the findings in terms of the specific research questions addressed in the study. Some of the broader implications of the research for the development of new types of organization, and for the ways in which we perceive organizational processes generally, have been mentioned, but not explored. Section 8.2 steps back from the data to take a wider view of them in relation to the six main themes identified in Chapter 2.8. These themes were: the applicability of various perspectives or models of organization; the related concepts of organizational goals and mission; the respective roles of structure and culture in organizations; the question of student attitudes towards organizations designed to serve their needs; and finally the broad theme of organizational change and development. These themes provide a useful framework for interpreting the findings of the study in terms of the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 2.

8.2 Key themes for the study

The six themes identified in Chapter 2.8 provided a broad framework for the design of the study and the analysis of the findings. Looking at the results overall in relation to these themes, a number of points emerge. The first two themes were concerned with *organisational perspectives and goals.* It was suggested that multiple perspectives are necessary to understand organizations, and that rational system and formal models may be particularly useful in examining their official goals and structures. As discussed in Chapter 2.2 these models suggest that:

(1) organizations are oriented towards the pursuit of clear, pre-specified goals identified by organizational leaders;

(2) these goals are agreed, and actively pursued, by organizational members;

(3) the implementation of goals is a rational process;

(4) organizational structures act as vehicles for the pursuit of goals;

(5) the organization comprises a system of interdependent and tightly coupled subunits.

In some respects, the official view of the colleges, as portrayed by principals, senior staff and college documents, was couched in terms of these rational, goal-oriented assumptions, particularly in the importance attributed to organizational leaders in establishing goals and to structures in pursuing these objectives. However, official perspectives on the *enactment* of goals, the extent to which they were actively pursued, suggest a somewhat more blurred picture. The principals' accounts of the blending of limited and extended versions of comprehensiveness, their recognition of pragmatic

considerations in goal seeking, particularly external constraints, and their emphasis on the need to take a gradualist and cautious approach, suggest that goals were not pre-specified and rationally pursued, but rather were evolutionary and negotiated. As the principals acknowledged, the extended comprehensiveness goals of mixed economy courses and social integration were loosely rather than tightly coupled with organizational activities (Weick, 1976). These characteristics of tertiary college goals would seem to indicate the applicability of insights drawn from political, ambiguity and subjective models. Of particular relevance here are Patterson *et al.*'s (1986) non-rational perspective, which highlights the powerful impact of environmental factors on organizational goals, and Fullan's (1991) analysis of goal implementation as an evolutionary process, rather than a pre-planned and straightforward activity.

Similar caveats about the limitations of rational approaches apply in looking at organizational members' perspectives. Staff views indicated considerable ambivalence about the extended comprehensiveness objectives espoused by college principals. Staff and student perspectives also cast doubt on the rational assumptions that leaders and members will share similar views on the means for pursuing organizational purposes, and the extent to which these purposes are achieved in practice. Thus teachers' generally negative views of organization structure ran counter to the principals' perspectives on the role of structure in achieving organizational goals. Similarly, the rather limited degree of perceived integration between various staff subgroups reported by the teachers themselves suggested that the objective of developing a relatively homogeneous and integrated organization had not been achieved to the extent portrayed in the official view. The staff perception of relatively separate subgroups of teachers suggests a degree of loose coupling between subunits that is at odds with both the official version and rational perspectives. There were also considerable differences of perspectives between different subgroups of students, indicating that the goal of meeting individual students needs was being met to rather differing degrees with differing groups. Similarly while principals

and staff saw their colleges as being relatively successful in providing for the pastoral needs of students, the students themselves took a very different view.

These differences and mismatches suggest the need to take into account individual and group meanings and interpretations of organizational purposes and the means for achieving them. As a number of the staff comments in Chapter 5.1 indicate, teachers may have interpreted the development of the tertiary college and its new goals in terms of their own agendas and the needs and interests of the subunit in which they worked. Baker (1988) and Grigg (1981) (see Chapter 2.6) similarly indicate that staff interpretations of the new colleges were influenced by personal concerns about their roles, status and promotion prospects, relative to their prior positions in the pre-existing schools and FE college. As political and subjective models acknowledge (see Chapter 2.2), there are competing realities of organizational goals and structures which rational, consensus-based approaches neglect.

The third theme raised in Chapter 2.8 related to the question of *mission*, or set of goals and associated values and sense of direction for the organization. Staff views on the goals which *were* and *ought to be* pursued by the colleges indicated limited support for the broad goals or mission of the colleges as set out by the principals. This would suggest that the principals had had limited success in achieving some sense of shared mission for the colleges. The finding that the majority of staff who joined their college post-reorganization had not done so primarily because of its *tertiary* status may also suggest a limited degree of staff commitment to tertiary goals.

Developing a mission which staff agreed with, at least in broad terms, seemed to have raised problems similar to those found by Peeke (1994) and Drodge and Cooper (1997) (see Chapter 2.3 above). Their studies suggested that staff commitment to mission was problematic and that FE and HE teachers were somewhat suspicious of what they saw as a management-imposed mission building process, which had elements of Hargreaves'

(1992) contrived collegiality. This may be because the colleges studied by Peeke (1994) and Drodge and Cooper (1997) were dealing with mission development in the period following the large scale legislative changes to FE and HE in the late 1980s and early 1990. Staff may thus have been somewhat wary of a process which they may have seen as more concerned with the strategic planning and funding requirements of FEFC and HEFC than with internal development purposes.

However, one might expect that developing a corporate mission in new organizations might be less difficult. In contrast to the colleges studied by Peeke (1994) and Drodge and Cooper (1997), for the tertiary colleges the development of mission was part of the process of generating a sense of common identity for a new organization, and was internally driven rather than externally imposed. Staff in new and developing organizations may have a high degree of commitment and enthusiasm, generated by being involved in an innovative project, something of a 'a pioneering spirit' (Senge, 1990; Schein, 1985). Perry (1976) similarly describes the early years of the Open University as characterized by a considerable degree of staff commitment to the OU's mission and to developing an innovative type of organization.

Nonetheless, the limited support of tertiary college staff for the mission espoused by principals suggests the absence of a high degree of commitment to organizational purposes among many staff. As noted above, the majority of staff who joined their colleges after restructuring indicated that *tertiary* status did not play a major part in their job decision. It should also be remembered that just over half the staff respondents had joined their colleges as part of the reorganization process, and thus had had little real choice about working in a tertiary college. While the principals saw the colleges as distinctive new organizations with a particular 'tertiary' mission, such staff may have been less committed to tertiary ideals. This interpretation is supported by the reports of some staff that their own work had been adversely affected or unchanged by tertiary reorganization (see Chapter 5.1.2). As noted in Chapters 2.2 and 2.5, different

participants may attribute very different meanings to organizational restructuring and change (Fullan, 1991; Greenfield, 1973).

As indicated in Section 8.1 above, principals' concerns in mission building seemed to be linked not just to problems of consensus building internally but particularly to issues involved in gaining support from external stakeholders, and hence enhancing the success and survival prospects of the colleges - Gross' (1969) adaptation and positional goals. This issue is taken up later in this chapter in connection with a consideration of the influence of environmental factors on organization development.

The fourth theme identified in Chapter 2.8 was concerned with the role of *culture* and *structure* in the development of new organizations. Organizational restructuring is based on the assumption that changes in structure will bring about changes in culture. However, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, structural alterations are only one factor in changing attitudes - attention is needed to other issues such as staff empowerment, commitment to, and ownership of, change (Fullan, 1991). At the time of the study, there was considerable emphasis on structural issues in bringing about change, and less attention was given to cultural matters. Thus, in the case of tertiary colleges, while it was acknowledged that staff would find the reorganization process disruptive (Baker, 1988), this tended to be seen as a short term transitional problem rather than a long-term issue, and principals paid considerable attention to devising appropriate internal *structural* arrangements. Despite their efforts, neither matrix nor departmental systems were perceived as effective vehicles for the pursuit of tertiary purposes, in the eyes of staff. Teachers tended to see the organization structure of their own colleges in terms of the negative attributes of departmental and matrix system discussed in Chapter 2.4, rather than the positive features noted by principals. Thus the claimed advantages for both forms of organization structure were not supported by staff views.

This is perhaps particularly surprising in the case of matrix systems, which, as the FESC (1989) survey noted, were adopted by a large proportion of tertiary colleges. They were seen as particularly appropriate for new and innovative organizations, and as noted in Chapter 4, principals who had adopted matrix systems expressed a strong belief that this form of organization was a powerful means of breaking down practical and attitudinal barriers. Nonetheless, staff did not endorse Kanter's (1983, p. 148) view of the matrix system as a vehicle for greater cross-college collaboration and 'organisational integrativeness' which promotes 'more freedom to walk around and across the organisation'. In general, organization structures - both matrix and departmental - tended to be seen as sources of constraint and frustration, in contrast with Hoy and Miskel's (1991) claim that structures serve to integrate individual motivation and organizational requirements. This would suggest the need to draw on alternatives to rational system and formal models, to explore organizational members perspectives on how structures can be designed to meet individual *and* organizational needs, as a basis for achieving a better match between these two purposes.

As regards the culture and ethos of the colleges, principals presented a broadly integrationist or paradigm 1 view in Meyerson and Martin's (1987) terms, suggesting that the colleges had developed distinctive and shared values, at least to some extent. Students, especially the full-time group, also expressed generally positive views about the atmosphere and ethos of their own colleges, but did not share the official view of the desirability of encouraging greater cultural cohesion and integration within the student body. The disparities in the perspectives of student subgroups suggests a considerable degree of cultural diversity.

Staff views on the distinctive ethos of the colleges were rather mixed. Their perspectives indicate that while they saw the colleges as providing a distinctive ethos for students they were less clear about whether the colleges provided a working environment for staff that could be clearly distinguished from other types of post-16 provision. Their views on the

persistence of 'them and us' attitudes among subgroups of staff, and the perceptions that tertiary reorganization had affected and benefited some areas of the colleges more than others, suggest the existence of 'balkanised' subunits (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992), rather than a college-wide cohesive culture. While this may reflect a continuation of attitudes and values developed in the pre-tertiary context, it may also stem in part from the heterogeneity of a complex organization, as Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 2 and Tipton's (1973) analysis of an FE college would suggest. If subject subcultures in schools are as strong as has been suggested (Ball, 1987; Paechter, 1995), there is no reason to suppose they are not equally prominent in colleges. Indeed, they may be more so, since colleges are generally larger and more structurally complex. In addition, the differentiation between subject groupings is accompanied by a distinction between academic and vocational areas of work which, as Gleeson and Mardle (1980) suggest, may be reinforced by many vocational students' and teachers' shared allegiance to the norms and values of the work place rather than the culture of the college. Overall, it would seem that restructuring has a limited impact on attitudes and cultures, and that complex organizations are likely to be characterized by a culture of differentiation, making it difficult to build a new and distinctive corporate culture.

The fifth theme identified in Chapter 2.8 related to *students' needs and attitudes.* These have been discussed in Section 8.1 above, so it is only necessary to emphasize two points here. First, the study suggests that students saw their needs to be met by their colleges to a considerable extent. However, their preference for much more pastoral and guidance provision suggests a need to explore the extent of match between clients' felt needs and organizational perspectives on their normative needs. Second, the diversity of student subgroup views would seem to indicate that organizations impact on different client groups in differing ways. There may be steps that can be taken to examine and redress some of these differential effects (Smith and Tomlinson, 1989). However, it may also be the case that we over-estimate the impact that organizations have on their members. Like staff, students' attitudes and norms about the organization in which they work may be

shaped as much by their experiences and identities within the broader societal environment as by what happens within the organization (Greenfield, 1973). The influence of external factors on organizational life is addressed in Section 8.3 below.

The final theme was concerned with *organisational change*. Four issues relating to organizational innovation discussed in Chapter 2.5 are important here: how far the colleges had achieved their intended purposes; the applicability of various organizational perspectives to the change process; the related questions of staff decision involvement and collaborative ways of working; and the relationship between culture and change. These issues are explored in turn below. In looking at how far the colleges had achieved their intended purposes, the rational model of change discussed in Chapter 2.5 was applicable to only a limited degree. Thus the colleges had succeeded in meeting the needs of students, particularly the full-time group, to a considerable extent. On the other hand there were a number of disparities in perspective and levels of satisfaction between different member groups (i.e. senior management, staff and students), different colleges and subgroups, as well as between ideals and practice. Thus, for example, there was an acknowledged 'implementation gap' (Becher, 1989) between the extended version of comprehensiveness and what was deemed to be pragmatically feasible in the light of external expectations. Similarly, there was an unrecognized implementation gap between staff and student perceptions of pastoral provision. These issues point to the limitations of rational models of the change process, which are prescriptive and normative, portraying what ought to happen, rather than what does happen in practice.

The four-stage model of organizational change proposed by Davies and Morgan (1983) (see Chapter 2.5), in contrast to rational approaches, acknowledges the scope for conflict and ambiguity, and the impact of 'non rational' aspects of organizational life on large-scale innovation (Fullan, 1993; Patterson *et al.*, 1986). At the time when the fieldwork for this study took place it was expected that the surveyed colleges would have reached Davies and Morgan's fourth stage - bureaucratization - where the innovation has become

embedded as part of the organization's normal, taken-for-granted routine. This was why the oldest-established colleges were asked to take part, as it was felt that staff perspectives in recently - opened colleges might still be coloured by the upheavals of the reorganization process. Grigg's (1981) study of one tertiary college (see Chapter 2.6 above) suggests that staff views were affected by problems experienced during reorganization which took place three years before his investigation. However, even though all the colleges in the study reported here had been operating for at least five years, staff view showed considerable evidence of sectional interests, 'them and us' attitudes and ambivalence about the benefits of tertiary reorganization (see Chapter 5.1). It would thus seem that the colleges had not reached a bureaucratization or consolidation stage, where tertiary objectives were accepted and pursued by all organizational members. This would add support to Fullan's (1991) assertions that educational change is a long-term and complex process, and that it may take many years for changes in attitudes and values to become embedded.

Another set of issues relating to educational change were concerned with staff decision involvement and collaborative working. As discussed in Chapter 2.5, involvement in decision making helps to encourage staff commitment to and ownership of organizational development, and collaborative ways of working tend to foster a shared culture. Participatory processes are an important feature of successful organizations. However, as Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) point out, to develop a shared organizational culture it is important that collaborative work takes place across the organization as a whole, rather than merely in 'balkanised' subgroups, where staff identities and loyalties are attached to the group instead of the organization. While the tertiary colleges study showed considerable evidence of differentiated subcultural groups, staff views indicated some support for a greater degree of involvement and cross-college working. Thus staff expressed a demand for greater participation in some decision areas at subunit level and in nearly all areas at institutional level. Similarly, quite high proportions of staff would have preferred more contact with staff in other subunits. These findings would suggest

that there was considerable scope, that was not being exploited by the colleges, for increasing staff commitment to organizational purposes and developing an organization-wide integrationist culture by increasing their decision involvement and contact with other subunits. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, matrix structures were seen by principals as a vehicle for widening staff involvement and developing a more cohesive culture, but they did not have this effect in the eyes of staff.

While matrix systems may not be an appropriate means of fostering a shared culture, the results suggest that there were considerable possibilities for responding to staffs' preferences for greater decision involvement and hence promoting greater cultural cohesion. However, there may be practical limitations in pursuing these possibilities. While there may have been scope for encouraging greater cross-college social contacts among staff, collaborative working needs to be based on shared interests and purposes (Nias *et al.*, 1992). It may be unrealistic to expect staff working on different courses and in different subunits to work co-operatively together. Clearly, the opportunities for cross-organizational collaboration are to some extent limited in large multi-purpose institutions, such as colleges. In this respect, the question of collaborative working may differ between colleges and schools. Schools are usually smaller, and most teaching staff have a common involvement in the national curriculum as a shared purpose . As discussed in Chapter 2.4, much of the literature on collaborative working and the building of shared cultures takes an integrationist approach, Meyerson and Martin's (1987) paradigm 1. This work is largely based on schools, and in some cases small primary schools (Nias *et al.*, 1989, 1992), where the opportunities for developing an organization-wide collaborative culture are likely to be greater than in larger, more complex organizations. Thus the scope for building an integrationist culture in tertiary colleges may be more limited than the school-based literature suggests.

The findings of the study indicate that structural change does not necessarily result in an integrationist culture, even when developing a shared culture is one of the primary

purposes of the innovation. There was considerable evidence of differentiated subgroups within the colleges. While developing an integrationist culture may have been problematic for the colleges, this is not to suggest that no cultural changes had taken place. It is possible that the colleges had developed more cohesive cultures than when they were first established, and that they were gradually 'moving towards' the development of an integrationist culture. This issue could not be explored in the study reported here. To investigate it one would need to conduct a longitudinal investigation, to assess over time whether there is evidence to suggest increasing cultural cohesion or continuing differentiation. Such a study would also enable the exploration of the issue raised by Hargreaves (1995) (see Chapter 2.5 above) about the relationship between culture and change, i.e. how far culture is a cause, an object or an effect of change, and what factors are likely to encourage the success of organizational changes which are designed to have cultural effects.

It may also be misleading to think of Meyerson and Martin's (1987) cultures of integration and differentiation as mutually exclusive alternatives. While, as suggested above, integrationist monocultures may be unrealistic in complex organizations, from the viewpoint of ambiguity perspectives, a broad, dominant official culture of cohesion may co-exist with various differentiated subcultures in organizations where there is a considerable degree of loose-coupling. Thus loosely linked subunits may pursue their own purposes to some degree but also subscribe in broad terms to official goals which are phrased loosely enough to achieve general consent but are not necessarily pursued to any great extent in practice. This view is far removed from a rational perspective of organizational purposes, but may provide a more realistic account. In this context Davies and Morgan's (1983) fourth stage in the organizational change process - bureaucratization - may be less clear cut than they suggest. Rather than reaching a position where there is organizational consensus and shared purposes as their model indicates, in complex organizations there may be a continuation of cultural pluralism, with subgroups loosely linked by rather vague and broad organizational purposes which

are characterized by ambiguity and fluidity, as Cohen and March's (1974) analysis suggests. From this point of view, an integrationist monoculture, Nias *et al.*'s (1992), 'culture of collaboration', may not be feasible, and also may not have the advantages that is claimed for it, particularly in the light of uncertain and changing environmental demands. Differentiated subcultures may promote greater organizational flexibility to adopt rapidly to new external expectations (Fidler, 1997).

The issue of organizational responsiveness to environmental demands is discussed further in Section 8.3. As noted in Chapter 3.3, it is a limitation of the study reported here that external perspectives on the tertiary colleges were not included in the investigation. However, as noted at various points in the discussion above, environmental factors may have had a significant rather than limited impact on the colleges' development. As a relatively small group of new and experimental organizations the tertiary colleges needed to be responsive to environmental demands and expectations in order to survive. Looking at external influences on the colleges may help to account for some of the mismatches between the intended purposes of the colleges and what was feasible in practice, the disparities in organizational members' views, and the issues in interpreting the colleges' goals that have been discussed above. In understanding organizational change, it may be as important to look 'from the outside in' as 'from the inside out' which is the predominant approach to organizational analysis. Examining ways in which the environment may help to shape organizational purposes and development may provide insights which are neglected by a focus on internal processes and perspectives. 'New institutionalist' ideas suggest that the environment may play a much greater role in organizational development than the approaches considered hitherto.

New institutionalist concepts, while providing an alternative source for explaining some of the problems and mismatches in perspectives and purposes noted above, may also help to account for the relatively small number of tertiary colleges in existence. Although the

colleges have been reasonably successful in achieving their more limited, if not the more extended, comprehensiveness goals, nontheless, they have remained relatively limited in numbers - at the time of writing, there are some 60 tertiary colleges. This contrasts with comprehensive schools, with which tertiary colleges share similar goals. Comprehensive schools developed on a wide scale during the 1970s and 1980s, becoming the most usual form of maintained secondary school provision. By the mid 1990s, nearly 90% of secondary age school pupils were educated in comprehensive schools (Benn and Chitty, 1996, p. 88). Since tertiary colleges extend comprehensive education to the post-16 age group, one might have expected a similar wide scale development of this form of provision. While there are relatively few tertiary colleges, recent years have seen the development of alternative new types of educational organization, particularly City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and grant-maintained (GM) schools. To examine the reasons for these developments, it is necessary to look more closely at the wider policy context.

8.3 Tertiary colleges and educational policy

The preceding analysis has focused on internal factors within the colleges, and the extent to which their official goals were realised from the perspectives of staff and students. Little reference has been made to the broader policy context in which the colleges operated or to the impact of environmental factors on their development. However, as noted in Section 8.2, a focus on internal aspects of new organizations may lead to the neglect of important influences on organizational innovation. Examining the part that may be played by the environment in shaping what happens inside organizations may provide an alternative source of explanation for some of the issues discussed above relating to organizational goals, cultures, structures and members' perspectives. This section of Chapter 8 interprets the findings of the study within the broader policy framework, drawing on ideas from new institutional theory in considering the tertiary

college in relation to other new forms of provision. This analysis suggests factors that may promote and inhibit the development of new types of organization.

New institutionalism

New institutionalist ideas provide a useful framework for analysing the development of the tertiary college as an organizational type. New institutionalism does not represent a coherent body of theory, but rather loosely-linked sets of concepts developing in various fields of study, particularly economics, organization theory, political science and sociology (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991, p. 3). Definitions of 'institution' vary, but the term can be broadly defined as generally accepted rules, norms and patterns of activity. *'These rules take the form of cultural theories, ideologies and prescriptions about how society works or should work to attain collective purposes'* (Meyer *et al.*, 1994, p. 9). Institutions give *'collective meaning and value to particular entities and activities'*, so that they become taken for granted as the norm. Institutionalized cultural rules define the meaning and identity of individuals and patterns of appropriate activity. They similarly define the purposes and legitimacy of organizations, professions and other groupings, and the activities they engage in (ibid).

A number of key themes can be identified in new institutionalism as applied to the study of organizations:

(1) Organizations are *'deeply and essentially embedded in wider institutional environments'* (Scott and Meyer, 1994, p. 1).

(2) Structures and activities in organizations are reflections and effects of rules and structures in the broader environment.

(3) The environmental rules and patterns that affect organizations include direct control (e.g. central government legislation, LEA requirements) as well as meaning systems, including societal taken - for - granted norms about appropriate structures and forms of activity.

(4) Organizations are driven to incorporate practices and procedures defined by prevailing societal concepts of organizational work, in order to establish and increase their legitimacy and validity and hence their resources and survival prospects.

(5) Organizational success is thus not merely concerned with the pursuit of formal goals, but equally importantly with the pursuit of environmental legitimacy and validation to ensure continuing support for the organization. Organizations that become isomorphic with their environment are more likely to prosper; organizations which are new, small or non-conforming with external norms are less likely to survive.

(6) Organizational effectiveness is therefore viewed in terms of environmental validation; the quest for institutional legitimacy may inhibit organizational effectiveness in terms of the achievement of internally-defined goals (Crowson and Boyd, 1995, p. 168).

(7) Organizations often adopt institutional rules and procedures ceremonially in order to demonstrate their conformity with external expectations. There may however be mismatches or tensions between ceremonial aspects of the organization and the pursuit of organizational goals. Organizations, therefore, tend to be loosely coupled, with gaps between their formal structures and goals and their day-to-day work activities.

(8) Institutional environments are pluralistic, presenting organizations with many different and often incompatible sets of rules and norms. This also tends to promote loose coupling within organizations.

Seen from this perspective, organizations are not a *priori* entities, but *'socially constructed and highly problematic, and action [is interpreted] as the enactment of broad institutional scripts, rather than a matter of internally - generated and autonomous choice, motivation and purpose'* (Meyer *et al.*, 1994, p. 10). Thus new institutionalism portrays the environment as having a central rather than merely peripheral impact on organizations. Open-systems approaches portray the relationship between the organization and its environment as a transactional one, involving boundary - spanning, negotiation and co-optation. New institutionalism on the other hand portrays a much deeper and more embedded relationship between the organization and its multiple institutional environments, like Russian dolls nested one within another. *'Environments in this view are more subtle in their influence; rather than being co-opted by organisations, they penetrate organisations, creating the lenses through which actors view the world, and the very categories of structure, action and thought'* (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991, p. 13). Thus, rather than being *'"out there", institutional environments are in organisations, and inside individuals'* (Scott, 1994, p. 97).

New institutionalism and the case of the tertiary college

Applying these ideas to the tertiary college as an organizational form helps to explain some of the issues discussed earlier in relation to the goals of the colleges and the disparities between the official view and those of organizational members. Seen in these terms, the development of the tertiary colleges can be interpreted in terms of the need to gain validation and support from competing sources of legitimacy in the environment, rather than merely in terms of achieving their official goals.

Institutional theorists identify three main environmental contexts: political regimes, socio-cultural norms and professional norms (Mitchell, 1995, p. 175). The three contexts are diverse and fragmented, and make competing demands on organizations. Political regimes are here interpreted broadly to include central and local government structures, official bodies such as examination boards, HE and employers' organizations. Political regimes exert influence on organizations through direct controls, e.g. legislative requirements, rules and regulations, as well as through meaning systems, e.g. dominant ideologies about appropriate education and training, and organizational and curricular frameworks for 16-19 provision. Socio-cultural and professional norms impact on organizations largely through meaning systems.

Viewed within this framework, the pursuit of the tertiary colleges' goals can be seen as problematic. As discussed earlier, rational system approaches are based on the premise that organizations are orientated towards the pursuit of internally-generated goals (Scott, 1987). In contrast, new institutionalism portrays the major purposes of organizations as *externally* generated. Organizations are driven by the need to conform to environmental rules, beliefs and expectations in order to enhance their legitimacy and survival prospects. Organizational decisions and actions 'are largely compelled by institutional rules' (Ogawa, 1992, p. 16). As indicated above, organizations which are new, small and few in number are particularly vulnerable if they do not conform to societal expectations. Thus, as a small group of innovative organizations, it was particularly important for the tertiary colleges to pursue validation and hence support from their various local and national institutional environments.

Despite principals' claims to have had a relatively high degree of autonomy in establishing a 'tertiary mission', from a new insitutionalist perspective they may have had little room for manoeuvre. Their agendas may have been determined not so much by internal priorities and purposes as by external demands and expectations, and in particular the need to defend the colleges against their critics. As discussed in Chapter 1,

two of the major claims made against the colleges, especially by defenders of school sixth forms, were that pastoral provision and A level results would be weakened. These criticisms can be seen in new institutional terms as an expression of a strong set of societal norms and values about the appropriate form of provision for 'academic' 16-19 year olds. They represented a major threat to the legitimacy and survival of the colleges, so it was important to counter them by demonstrating the colleges' ability to conform with the societally valued features of the sixth form. As one of the principals pointed out *'The [tertiary] college must ... set up a first-class pastoral care system and achieve good A level results as soon as possible'* (Terry, 1987, p. 51). Thus, establishing the colleges as an appropriate and acceptable form of organization for 16-19s in the eyes of their many stakeholders may have been more important than the pursuit of 'comprehensiveness' goals. Where very radical innovation is pursued by organizations, *'calling into question their continuity with other organisations in the same sector, organisation members, clients or legitimating publics may lose confidence in the legitimacy or efficacy of the organisation'* (Mitchell, 1995, p. 173).

Thus principals and senior staff had to steer a careful and not too innovative line in establishing credibility and support for the colleges, for example in pointing to 'traditional' aspects of their provision (e.g. exam pass rates, close supervision and control of students' work and behaviour), in order to reassure parents, students, employers and the public at large that their standards would be as high as those of pre-existing types of provision. The suggestion from College 7 about demonstrating good exam results *and then* developing more egalitarian goals (my italics) (see Chapter 4.3 above), and staff comments about 'obsession with exam results' (see Chapter 5.1) might be interpreted in this light. A similar emphasis on traditional, rather than innovative norms and symbols, e.g. as regards school rules and uniform requirements, has been noted in the early CTCs, as they sought to establish themselves as viable alternatives to maintained schools (Whitty *et al.*, 1993). Tertiary College Panel documents and individual college prospectuses provide further examples of the ceremonial reference to symbols and events

which celebrate tradition and continuity rather than innovation, for example in reports and photographs of successful sports teams, and Oxbridge entrants. Institutional theorists have noted similar characteristics in new consumer goods and services (Mitchell, 1995). Thus, for example, new cars and supermarkets are remarkably similar to their competitors; innovative aspects appear only at the margins, e.g. in interior design or packaging, reflecting the importance of establishing environmental legitimacy and confidence by emphasising continuity rather than newness.

While endorsed by staff, the more radical or extended version of comprehensiveness received little support among students or within the external environment, hence the principals' caveats about the feasibility of achieving these more extended goals. A number of powerful forces in the political regime environment, as well as social norms, were at odds with the more egalitarian comprehensive goals, making it difficult for the colleges to pursue them. Thus, for example, the demands of exam bodies, HE institutions and employers, as well as the expectations of students and parents about appropriate curricular routes, tended to militate against the development of mixed economy course programmes. Similarly, long established professional and social norms about the relative status and prestige of academic and vocational course routes made it difficult to achieve parity of esteem between the two areas.

New institutionalist ideas also emphasize that different sets of norms and rules in the three main environmental contexts make competing demands on organizations. Viewed in these terms, the tertiary colleges may be seen as attempting to reconcile differing and possibly incompatible sets of institutional rules. Thus the colleges sought to pursue a combination of two rather different versions of comprehensiveness, derived largely from professional norms. However, the colleges operated in a political regime environment where (except within the tertiary colleges) academic and vocational 16-19 provision was divided into largely separate routes by organizational and curricular structures. Thus schools and sixth form colleges provided largely 'academic' courses and qualifications,

while FE colleges provided mainly vocational courses and qualifications, with some A level/GCE provision. This separation was largely endorsed by socio-cultural norms and expectations about appropriate forms of education and training, based on historical traditions of different forms of provision for the two routes. Within this context, the tertiary colleges were swimming against the current of long-established institutional norms relating to 16-19 provision, and hence the extended comprehensive goals of parity of esteem and social integration would seem to be highly problematic.

Among organizational members, institutionalized norms about the nature and role of FE and school teachers, subject departments, and academic and vocational areas of work, derived from professional socialization and previous experience, may have acted to inhibit greater co-ordination and integration between the various sub-groups. *'Organisational managers are unable to move their professional workers very far from the environmental norms of their own profession'* (Mitchell, 1995, p. 174). It may thus have been difficult for the colleges to foster changes in attitudes and beliefs that challenged the existing norms of professional subgroups of staff.

Students may also be seen as subscribing to broader 'institutionalised scripts' about what it means to be a student, or a young worker in the case of most part-time students. From this perspective, their limited response to the social integration goals of the colleges, in terms of social mixing between course groups and participation in extra-curricular activities, may have arisen because these were not seen as part of the 'script' and hence were deemed irrelevant. In a similar way, students' rather negative perceptions of the pastoral provision of the colleges may have been promoted less by the quality of pastoral guidance *per se* than by broader environmentally - located concerns about exam requirements and the limited employment market for young people at the time of the survey. In this respect, organizational leaders and teachers may over estimate the power they have to influence the experiences of the organization by students, since these

experiences may be shaped as much by the broader institutional meanings and identities of clients as by the organization itself.

New institutionalist ideas are also useful in interpreting the findings of the study on organizational structures. Rational system and formal approaches assume that structures serve as a vehicle for the achievement of organizational purposes. New institutionalism, on the other hand, suggests that organizations adopt structures not to pursue internally-derived goals but to mirror wider institutional norms. *'By adopting structures that embody widely shared beliefs, organisations can gain a measure of legitimacy with stakeholders in their external environment'* (Ogawa, 1992, p. 16). Institutionally - sanctioned structures are adopted for symbolic and ceremonial reasons, to demonstrate conformity with environmental expectations, rather than for their role in pursuing organizational purposes (Rowan and Meyer, 1991). Thus the different structures adopted by the tertiary colleges can be seen as based on two rather different sources of validation and symbolic meaning systems: on the one hand, the traditional and widely accepted FE departmental system; on the other, the matrix system, associated with innovativeness and flexibility. As the findings of the staff survey showed, neither system was perceived as a vehicle for effectiveness in terms of organizational goal achievement. While this is hard to explain in the light of rational system approaches, from a new institutionalist perspective, it is to be expected. As noted in points 6 and 7 above, structures and goals tend to be loosely-coupled, since structures serve primarily to enhance institutional validation for organizations, rather than to promote internal purposes; structures adopted for their symbolic and legitimating features may actually inhibit the pursuit of internal efficiency and effectiveness.

The emphasis of new institutionalism on loose coupling between goals, structures, subunits and organizational activities also relates closely to the earlier discussion of loose-coupling from the perspective of ambiguity models (Section 8.2). The two sets of approaches both give prominence to this 'non-rational' aspect of organizations. Loose

coupling between subunits may help to account for the rather marked differences of perspective between various groups of students and staff. This may have been reinforced by split site operation - nearly all the colleges in the survey operated on a number of sites, often several miles apart. Working in separate locations away from the central site, with little opportunity for contact with other staff and students, and hence relative insulation from the central norms and culture of the organization, may have promoted the development of site based subcultures rather than the whole - college, integrationist ethos that the principals sought to promote.

Lack of environmental support

From a new institutionalist perspective, limited support within the political regime environment and associated dominant ideologies, as well as constraining the development of comprehensive goals among existing colleges, may also help to explain the limited growth in numbers of the tertiary colleges. The colleges were sponsored and supported by their respective LEAs, but received little official sanction or even recognition by the DES and central government. Official documents made little reference to tertiary colleges, and DES statistics usually incorporated data relating to them with figures for FE colleges generally, rather than as a separate category. It was not until the late 1980s that HMI reported on the tertiary colleges as a separate group of organizations.

Benn and Chitty (1996) have traced the history of somewhat lukewarm attitudes towards comprehensive education generally during the 1980s within the government, DES and national media. Despite pressures to rationalize provision, as a result of falling rolls and surplus places, during this period a strong lobby with close links with central government continued to press for the retention of school sixth forms and to resist the development of comprehensive schools and colleges. As noted in Chapter 1.1, DES circular 4/82 required the secretary of state to consider the position of 'schools of proven worth' when

reviewing LEA reorganization schemes. While the DES continued to approve tertiary restructuring schemes, these were sometimes modified to include the continuation of sixth forms in 'schools of proven worth'. Thus, for example, Sheffield LEA was obliged to change its plans for a system of tertiary colleges throughout the city to include the retention of six 11-18 schools in the prosperous south-western part of the city where parents and schools had run a strong campaign to save the sixth forms. At the same time, much larger numbers of sixth form colleges were approved. In many areas, the establishment of sixth form, rather than tertiary colleges was seen as a more acceptable policy alternative since it involved less radical restructuring, and school interest groups could view the new colleges as preserving at least some of the ethos of the school sixth form.

Thus from a new institutionalist perspective, the tertiary colleges remained a relatively small and somewhat vulnerable group of organizations which failed to gain the legitimacy that would have resulted from the support and sponsorship of the DES, a strong force in the political regime environment. The rather negative attitudes of the media to comprehensive education in general as the 1980s progressed (Benn and Chitty, 1996) may also have promoted a lack of enthusiasm among the public more generally for tertiary reorganization, thus reducing the scope for potential validation from another important environmental context - socio-cultural norms and expectations.

Institutional legitimacy in a quasi-market context

In terms of new institutionalism, the passage of the 1988 Education Reform Act and related legislation of the 1990s can be seen as removing important sources of legitimacy and support from the tertiary colleges, both in terms of direct control and more subtly in terms of meaning systems. The legislation took away LEAs' ability to plan and rationalize their systems of provision, by enabling schools to opt for grant maintained (GM) status, and later by taking post-16 colleges out of LEA control and establishing

them as independent corporations. A survey of the first 100 GM schools (Bush *et al.*, 1993) found that a large proportion had opted out of LEA control for reasons associated with reorganization (e.g. to avoid closure or amalgamation, to stay selective, to retain the sixth form). Thus a number of tertiary college reorganization schemes at the planning or consultation stage came to a halt with the passage of the 1988 Act. Henceforth, schools were able to resist LEA restructuring schemes by threatening to opt out, 'playing the GM card' (Johnson and Schagen, 1994, p. 6).

The new legislative framework and its underpinning ideology, as put forward in various White Papers, also ran counter to the ideological rationale for tertiary colleges which was based on comprehensive principles of co-operation and parity of esteem between educational organizations, and choice of courses *within* the organization rather than choice *between* difference types of provider. The new quasi-market framework promoted competition and differentiation between educational organizations, and the impetus to diversify and specialize, with consumer choice between different forms of provision as the justification. The 1992 DFE White Paper expressed the government's commitment to 'a rich and diverse system' of education (p. 2), and to promote different types of provision to enhance parental choice - GM schools, CTCs, and technology (and later) language colleges and other forms of curricular specialization.

The legislative changes of 1988 onwards and the associated ideology of the education market place and consumer choice can thus be seen in new institutional terms as a strong force in the political regime environment countering the underlying rationale of tertiary colleges and comprehensive schools, and at the same time legitimising and, indeed, sponsoring the development of GM schools and CTCs, based on principles of diversity, specialism and competition among quasi-autonomous organizations.

As noted earlier, new institutional theory suggests that organizations tend to become isomorphic with their environments - organizational success and survival depend on the

ability to adjust to meeting changing societal demands (Crowson and Boyd, 1995, p. 210). Given the strong emphasis in the political regime environment on quasi-autonomous organizations competing in the market place, one would expect organizations to adapt to take account of these expectations. However, there have been numerous examples of the development of collaborative relations and infra-structures between educational organizations that are in many respects in competition with each other (Bridges and Husbands, 1996; Johnson and Schagen, 1994; Benn and Chitty, 1996). Bridges and Husbands (1996) argue that an education system that effectively meets the needs of all students *'requires a broader vision of educational provision than that provided by the self interested pursuit'* of their own ends by competing schools and colleges (p. 6).

Nonetheless, there is evidence that organizations have been adjusting to meet the demands of the market environment (Bush *et al.*, 1993; Whitty *et al.*, 1993). On the basis of a longitudinal study of schools in three LEAs, Gewirtz *et al.*, (1995) identify a 'values drift', with schools moving along a continuum away from comprehensive values towards market driven norms.

This values drift, they suggest, was occurring on a number of dimensions between two largely oppositional ideal types of the nature and purpose of schooling: *from* an agenda stressing social and educational concerns, with an emphasis on community and student needs, an integrationist and sharing ethos, and co-operation among schools; *towards* an agenda stressing reputation, image and budgeting concerns, with an emphasis on attracting motivated parents and able children, and on student performance, an exclusive and academic ethos and competition with other schools. Schools were moving along this continuum to differing degrees at varying rates, depending on the competitiveness of their local market contexts. Gewirtz *et al.* conclude that market pressures are halting and reversing the development of comprehensive schooling and contributing to a process of 'decomprehensivization', whereby schools become increasingly differentiated and

stratified, with an intensification of status hierarchies. Market pressures may be expected to have a similar impact on tertiary colleges; an examination of the extent to which they have been driven to dilute their comprehensiveness goals post-incorporation is an important area for future research.

Environmental factors promoting and inhibiting new types of organization: CTCs and GM schools

As regards CTCs and GM schools, the market oriented legislation and ideology provided a strong legitimating context in which they could be expect to develop and thrive. It is too early to judge the success and survival potential of CTCs and GM schools as organizational types. Indeed, at the time of writing with a recent general election, their future legal status is unclear. The first such organizations opened in 1989 so few have had a full cohort through from 11-18 under the new arrangements. There is limited empirical data on the internal processes of these organizations and the perspectives of staff and students, for comparison with the tertiary colleges study.

Provisional evidence, however, suggests that they have been less successful than the government hoped in establishing widespread legitimacy and support among their various stakeholders. The creation of a 'pilot network' of twenty new secondary schools, CTCs, was first announced at the Conservative party conference in 1986. Run by independent trusts free from LEA control, the CTCs were to be established in inner-city areas and to admit pupils representing the full range of ability, and to provide a curricular emphasis on technological, scientific and practical education. It was intended that CTCs would provide 'beacons of excellence' to stimulate other schools to follow. While the DES would meet the running costs, sponsors from business and industry would meet all or a substantial part of the capital costs (DES, 1986, p. 8).

However, the anticipated sponsorship largely failed to materialize, amounting to no more than 20% of the capital costs of the programme (Whitty *et al.*, 1993, p. 59), with public money funding the remainder. Most large companies were reluctant to breach existing links with a range of schools, to invest large sums of money in a single new organization. Suitable inner-city sites were also hard to obtain, as the largely Labour-controlled councils that owned the proposed sites were reluctant to release redundant buildings and land to aid the formation of new organizations that would be in direct competition with local LEA-maintained schools. Like LEAs, the teaching profession was also firmly opposed to the development of CTCs (Whitty *et al.*, 1993). The CTC idea thus failed to capture the support of an important force in the political regime environment (i.e. employers) as well as the support of the teaching profession and LEAs. Only 15 CTCs were established, though the Technology Schools, Technology/Language Colleges and Specialist Schools programmes provided a scaled down version, whereby existing LEA and GM schools were able to apply for capital grants to establish themselves as 'centres of excellence' in various curriculum areas. Despite widespread resistance from the education profession and apathy from potential sponsors, the CTCs that were established gained legitimacy and support from parents in the areas they served. The CTCs examined by Whitty *et al.* (1993) and Walford and Miller (1991) were heavily oversubscribed and developing a significant market appeal in relation to other local schools.

A similar analysis can be made of the GM schools initiative. Like CTCs, GM schools were heavily promoted by the government as part of the strategy to increase diversity and parental choice. The 1992 White Paper proclaimed the success of GM schools and announced that: *'the government wants all schools to be able to take advantage of the GM option'* (DFE, 1992, p. 52). The policy was strongly resisted by LEAs and the teaching profession. The early GM schools secured a considerable financial advantage vis à vis LEA schools, as well as increased autonomy in deployment of their resources. These were the two most frequently mentioned reasons for opting out in surveys of GM

schools by Bush *et al.*, (1993) and Fitz *et al.*, (1993). Other important incentives were LEA reorganization or closure plans. By 1996 there were some 1100 GM schools. However, this was scarcely the mass opt-out anticipated by the government. The majority of schools chose to remain loyal to their LEAs. Nonetheless there is some evidence that GM schools were developing a strong market appeal among parents. The majority of respondents to the Bush *et al.* survey (1993) reported an increase in applications since opting out, and nearly a third of the GM comprehensive schools used some form of selection of applicants on the basis of interviews, reports or examinations. Similarly Benn and Chitty (1996) found that GM schools in their study were more likely to be oversubscribed than maintained schools (p. 514). Although they were popular with parents, and despite strong promotion by the government, an important force in the political regime environment, GM schools and CTCs failed to attract support from important stakeholders - employers, LEAs and the teaching profession - and hence did not become established on a widespread basis.

Nonetheless, there was evidence that diversity of provision in a competitive market environment, linked with the publication of examination and test results, was leading to a hierarchy of organizations, disparity of esteem between schools and a situation where popular and over-subscribed schools at the top of the hierarchy selected pupils, rather than parents selecting schools. Thus Whitty *et al.*, (1993, p. 181) identify 'a developing pecking order of schools'. Many of the CTC parents they interviewed were 'highly critical' of comprehensive schools and saw CTCs as more like grammar or independent schools. Similarly Walford and Miller (1991) suggest that the CTCs have *'played a major part in re-legitimising inequality of provision for different pupils and selection of children according to interests and motivation'* (p. 165). *'The inevitable result'* of a quasi-market in education is, they argue, *'a hierarchy of schools, with the private sector at the head (with some pupils on assisted places), the CTCs and GM schools next, and the various locally-managed LEA schools following'* (ibid).

This developing hierarchy further challenged the ideological rationale of tertiary colleges and comprehensive schools, based on parity of esteem between providers and common schooling for all students. Thus Dale (1990) suggests that the development of new types of organization such as CTCs, *'facilitates a shift away from collectivism to individualism, from a view that a common school is desirable to one that encourages parents/consumers to shop around and maximise their children's opportunities of enjoying an "uncommon" education'* (pp. 12-13).

The 1992 White Paper explicitly denies such suggestions, claiming that diversity and specialization would not lead to selection and that *'the government wants to ensure that there are no tiers of schools within the maintained system, but rather parity of esteem between different schools, in order to offer parents a wealth of choice'* (DFE, 1992, p. 10). Nonetheless, the government's increasing lack of support for comprehensive education and moves towards endorsing selection by schools soon became more overt, with the provisions in the 1996 Education Bill for widening selection and the prime minister's advocacy of *'a grammar school in every town'* (TES, 15.11.96).

As discussed earlier, new institutionalist ideas suggest that organizations operate within three main environmental contexts: the political regime, socio-cultural norms and professional norms (Mitchell, 1995). During the period after the 1988 Education Reform Act, the political regime environment exerted increasing pressures on educational organizations to compete for students and resources in order to survive. These pressures operated both through direct controls - the legislative framework, including the requirement to provide published performance data - and associated meaning systems - the ideology of a quasi-market in education, with increased parent choice and competition as an impetus to improvements in performance standards. Although some stakeholders in the political regime and professional environments resisted these developments, there was evidence of support from the socio-cultural environment, in terms of parental approval of GM schools and CTCs. There was also evidence of a

developing hierarchy of schools. Successful organizations respond to external expectations, becoming isomorphic with their environments. In the quasi market context for education, the most successful organizations were those which were able to attract large numbers of students and to achieve high levels of performance in tests and examinations (Gerwirtz *et al.*, 1995). These organizations received external validation and support in the form of resources linked to student recruitment, and hence strengthened their success and survival prospects. At the same time, the legislative framework reduced the likelihood of further development of the tertiary colleges. The ideology of a quasi-market in education also ran counter to the underlying ideological rationale for tertiary colleges, based on parity of esteem among students and organizations, and co-operation rather than competition. It thus threatened the legitimacy of the existing colleges and weakened their sources of environmental support.

The future for tertiary colleges?

(a) Organizational diversity

In this policy context, in largely rural areas where tertiary colleges are the sole maintained 16-19 providers, the colleges may continue to prosper, provided that they continue to meet the needs of their stakeholders. Where they are located in larger conurbations, with other types of 16-19 provision easily accessible to students, tertiary colleges may have to adjust their goals quite considerably - probably on the lines of the 'values drift' continuum identified by Gewirtz *et al.* (1995) - in order to compete effectively and survive. In the early days of the tertiary colleges' development, establishing their legitimacy led to pressures to demonstrate that their examination results (particularly for A levels) equalled or surpassed those of other providers. In a market context where published examination performance data are an important source of legitimacy, such pressures are likely to be intensified. The tertiary colleges may find

it difficult to compete with organizations which have a selective entry policy for A level examinations.

It might be suggested that a new government might alter the quasi-market arena, for example by bringing CTCs and GM schools back under LEA control, and other measures to promote greater equity between providers. However, the current structure of diversity could not be dismantled easily or quickly. Thus, for example, there are wide disparities in the levels of resources, materials and equipment of CTCs and technology colleges and those of most LEA maintained schools (Fitz *et al.*, 1993). Schools that have a competitive market advantage are likely to resist attempts to dilute this.

At a broader level, the market context is likely to remain, since it forms part of a wider trend to 'marketise' social welfare provision generally, evident not only in education but in social services, housing, health and community care. Provision has been radically reformed, involving *'a shift away from centralised, collectivist, needs-led planning, towards a market-led devolved system of welfare based on the principle of "consumer sovereignty"'* (Whitty *et al.*, 1993, p. 161). Similar trends have been evident internationally, for example in the USA and Australia. The rhetoric of consumerism in welfare provision is in accord with the wide degree of choice that the public now expects in the purchase of goals and services generally. There is thus unlikely to be widespread public support or central government impetus to a radical restructuring of the education system based on values of parity between institutions and equity of provision. Hence the values underpinning tertiary colleges are likely to remain unsupported by environmental forces.

On the other hand, Benn and Chitty (1996) report growing public support for the principle of comprehensive education - in the 1960s only about a quarter of the population were in favour, whereas by 1996 an ICM poll found that 65% supported a fully comprehensive system (*Guardian*, 7.2.96). However, in a context of diversity of

provision, parents acting as consumers are likely to choose what they see as 'the best' for their own children, notwithstanding the 'collectivist guilt' felt by some parents about the conflict between *'the best for their children and the best for all children'* (Whitty *et al.*, 1993, p. 89). Similarly, despite their avowed commitment to comprehensive education, members of the Labour front bench rejected their neighbourhood comprehensive schools in choosing secondary schools for their own children (*Guardian*, 10.5.96). Parents acting as consumers tend to pursue individualist rather than collectivist ends; they do not combine as a group to constitute an institutional force influencing the development of educational provision. For parents to successfully influence educational decision making at national and local levels, *'they must become interwoven into the fabric of the institutional environment of schools'* (Goldring, 1995, p. 51).

Thus in a context of diversity and differentiation of provision, parents acting as individual consumers are likely to select educational organizations which are located towards the upper end of Walford and Miller's (1991) hierarchy - organizations which are increasingly specialising and using some form of selection of students (Whitty *et al.*, 1993; Bush *et al.*, 1993). Schools are becoming increasingly 'decomprehensivised' as they seek to compete in the status hierarchy (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995). In these circumstances the environmental sources of legitimacy and support for tertiary colleges, as comprehensive organizations, are weakened. Their ability to gain external validation is questionable, unless they follow the 'decomprehensivisation', 'values drift' route of specialization and increased competition, which runs directly counter to their underlying rationale.

(b) Curricular disparity

Just as *organisational* diversity of provision runs counter to the underlying ideology of the tertiary colleges, so does the continuing *curricular* disparity between academic and vocational routes. Tertiary colleges seek to promote parity of esteem between these

routes and social integration between the students following them, but there are strong environmental pressures working against these goals, including curricular and examination structures in 16-19 provision, HE expectations, the traditional separation of academic and vocational education and teachers, and entrenched attitudes in society at large. There have been several structural changes - particularly the reform of vocational provision, the merging of the DFE and DE, and later of SCAA and NCVQ to form QCA. Nonetheless, A levels, GNVQ and NVQ still form largely separate routes, with A levels continuing to enjoy the highest status and prestige (Higham *et al.*, 1996).

The terms of reference for the Dearing review of 16-19 provision constrained a full consideration of the structure of the 16-19 curriculum and examination system. The Secretary of State required that the review should be conducted within the framework of existing provision: the review should *'have particular regard to the need to maintain the rigour of GCE A levels'* and to *'continue to build on the current development of GNVQs and NVQs'* (DFEE, 1996, p. 2). The Dearing report (DFEE, 1996) proposed a framework for core skills, credit transfer and common certification which offered some scope for greater links between academic and vocational pathways and hence, at least in the long term, for developing greater parity of esteem between them.

However, this is not likely to happen easily or quickly. There is evidence that despite the existence of GNVQ, schools are continuing to advise those students with the best GCSE results to take A level courses, and that few higher-attaining students make a deliberate choice to take GNVQs (Higham *et al.*, 1996, p. 148). Similarly the National Survey Report on GNVQs noted that the A level population is drawn mainly from students who achieved the highest GSCE results, and the GNVQ Advanced cohort from those students in the middle range of GCSE performance (FEU, 1994, p. 33). Despite efforts to raise the status of vocational qualifications, studies of student attitudes show that the academic route - i.e. A levels - continues to have 'much greater status' and prestige, and to be perceived as the only route into higher education (Foskett and Hesketh, 1996; Hemsley-

Brown, 1996). Thus the institution of divided academic/vocational provision continues to receive strong environmental support, through socio-cultural norms and expectations as well as structures and norms in the political regime environment. A new institutional perspective would suggest that organizations, unless they are large and powerful (e.g. multi-national corporations), are unlikely to be able successfully to challenge embedded institutionalized norms. In the light of these environmental pressures, the tertiary colleges' goals of parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes, accompanied by greater social integration between the two groups, are likely to remain difficult to achieve.

Institutions or organizations?

New institutional theory is helpful in emphasising that *'no organisation can be properly understood apart from its wider social and cultural context'* (Scott, 1995, p. 151), which permeates the ways of working and thinking of organizational members. Analysis of the tertiary colleges in the light of this theory suggests that educational innovation is unlikely to be successful without environmental support. New institutionalism provides a useful framework for analysing the environmental factors that help to promote or hinder the establishment and survival of tertiary colleges and other new types of organizations within the recent policy context.

In this respect, it is an important corrective to the perspectives on organizations discussed in Chapter 2.2 which focus largely on events *within* the organization, and hence tend to neglect the importance of environmental influences. These perspectives vary considerably in the emphasis given to external influences. Ambiguity and subjective models do acknowledge them, whereas rational system approaches (which, Ogawa (1992) argues, are implicit in most organizational analyses) portray organizations as relatively independent and insulated from their environments, having rational structures directed to the pursuit of internally-determined goals (Scott, 1995). The distinguishing

characteristic of new institutional theory, as compared with the organizational perspectives considered earlier, is that it looks at organizations 'from the outside in' rather than 'from the inside out'. Institutional rules and norms are thus not just peripheral influences on organizations but central features of organizational life. New institutional ideas provide insights which help to explain some of the issues involved in interpreting goals, structures and members' perspectives, discussed in Sections 8.1 and 8.2, insights which are ignored by approaches which focus on internal events.

However, new institutional theory has two main limitations for the analysis here. First, it may tend to lead to a form of environmental determinism, where an emphasis on contextual factors produces an underestimation and devaluing of the scope for action and influence on the organization's development by its leader and members. Second, by focusing on broad groups or types of organization, new institutionalist analyses tend to de-emphasize the *differences* between individual organizations of the same type - a feature which has been particularly evident in the tertiary colleges study. Although new institutionalism is concerned with environmental factors, it focuses on broad institutionalized rules and scripts, rather than specific local contextual factors which may be important influences on the individual development of each organization.

Some of the factors that may have contributed to the distinctive differences between the colleges were discussed in Section 8.1. Although the study was unable to investigate this issue in detail, the leadership role of the principals is likely to have been particularly important in two respects. First, acting to some extent collectively through the Tertiary College Panel and joint publications (e.g. Janes *et al.*, 1985), a small group of principals of the earliest established colleges performed an important mission-building function in developing a philosophy and rationale for the colleges, and disseminating this to the colleges' stakeholders, thus establishing legitimacy and support for the new organizational form. Although principals of the early CTCs performed a somewhat similar role in establishing the 'public face' of these organizations (see Whitty *et al.*,

1993), this was arguably a much less significant function, since, in contrast to the tertiary colleges, the concept and role of CTCs were relatively clearly set out in the White Paper, legislation and a DES prospectus, and their development was co-ordinated and promoted by a government quango, the CTC Trust, which produced numerous publications explaining and justifying the distinctive CTC mission (e.g. CTC Trust, 1991; Fey, 1991).

The second area where the leadership role of the principals was likely to have been important was in establishing the philosophy and ways of working of their own colleges. Different approaches to these tasks by the founding principals, in combination with the particular organizational saga of each college, may have contributed to differing cultures. These factors may help to account for the inter-college differences observed in the study. Tertiary reorganization entailed a relatively radical and large-scale restructuring of provision, involving several pre-existing organizations. In most cases the principals were appointed a year or more before the college opened, and had a high degree of autonomy and scope to plan the main features of the new college: staffing and organization structures, curricular programmes, and building and adaptation of accommodation. In this way they were able to shape the mission of the organization, its structures and norms and developing culture, through the appointment of staff who shared similar values, to a much greater degree than a principal joining a pre-existing organization with established ways of working.

As Schein (1985) suggests, 'founder leaders' of new organizations play a central role in the establishment and development of culture (see Chapter 2.4 above). The major role of organizational founders is to transmit and embed a shared sense of the organization's distinctive culture and identity. Later, as the organization becomes larger and more complex, the culture-building influence of the founder declines and dissonances develop as competing views of the future of the organization emerge among member groups. Tight coupling between the core culture and member groups tends to become looser as these differences develop. From a new institutional perspective, the role of the 'founder-

leaders' of the tertiary colleges was considerably circumscribed. Also the colleges were not entirely 'new' in Schein's (1985) sense, as they were formed by amalgamation of pre-existing organizations (though even in 'new' organizations, members bring with them cultural norms and values from their previous and current experiences, so culture building does not start with a clean slate). Nonetheless, Schein's (1985) analysis may help to account for some of the inter-college differences found in the study.

Thus organizational members' perspectives may have been more positive in those smaller colleges where the principal had a clear sense of mission and direction which had been shared with staff and successfully embedded in the culture of the organization. Those colleges where staff and student views were less positive may have been larger and more complex colleges which had grown beyond the size where the principal was able to keep a personal overview of all subunits, and/or where the founding principal had been less successful in putting forward and developing commitment to a shared purpose and organizational culture. Colleges with less positive staff and student attitudes may also have been subject to some turbulence and change, disturbing the equilibrium of cultural consensus and integration, for example, internal reorganization, as in the case of Colleges 2 and 4. It would seem that the vision of founding principals coupled with the leadership capacity to share and embed that vision, mediated by the organizational saga, and attitudes and values which members bring to the new organization, combine to powerfully affect the development of organizational culture. As discussed earlier, this culture, in complex organizations, may not be monolithic and fully 'integrationist' in Meyerson and Martin's (1987) terms. Instead, there may be a broad set of organizational purposes, which are expressed in general terms to gain the consent of members, loosely linked to differentiated subcultures which pursue more specific purposes.

8.4 Conclusion: issues for exploration

Analysis of the finding of the tertiary colleges study suggests six broad sets of related themes and issues for further exploration in studies of the evolution of new types of educational organization. These issues draw on a range of the organizational perspectives discussed in Chapter 2. As Bolman and Deal (1991) point out, 'multiframe thinking' is necessary to understand the multiple and often paradoxical dimensions of organizational life. While it is important to examine the official purposes of new organizations, formal goals do not reflect the complexities and ambiguities of organizational decisions and processes.

The first theme relates to the nature and pursuit of organizational *goals*. One might expect in relatively new organizations, where goals have been quite recently established, that they would be reasonably clear and uncontested. However, as the study has shown, the assumptions of traditional rational system and formal models do not provide an adequate basis for interpreting organizational purposes. As discussed earlier, goals can be problematic and largely rhetorical rather than applied - they may be diffuse and imprecisely defined, not necessarily shared or pursued by organizational members or subunits, and affected as much by external factors as internal priorities. Schools and colleges are, however, under increasing pressure to plan and meet measurable goals and targets (see e.g. OFSTED, 1996) prescribed by central government and expressed in somewhat rationalistic terms. In this context, there is a need for exploration of how educational organizations can set achievable school/college-wide goals which gain the commitment and support of staff and students, and hence are meaningful and actively pursued as shared purposes.

A second important theme is the relationship between organizational *structures* and *cultures* and the ways in which these interact to influence members' attitudes. As the findings of the study suggest, structure does not determine attitudes (despite the

expectations of the principals), and it would seem that culture and structure influence each other in complex and subtle ways (see Hargreaves, 1995), giving rise to significantly different perspectives among different subgroups of students and staff. Further understanding is needed of the unintended, and often unrecognized, differential impact of organizational culture and structure on different member groups, how and why this occurs, and steps that can be taken by organizational managers to reduce or avoid it.

Third, although not explored in detail in this study, the *leadership* role of the principals, in particular the founding leaders of the various colleges, seems likely to have contributed to the significant inter-college differences in staff and student attitudes. Drawing on Schein's (1985) thesis, there is scope for the investigation of the role of founding and successor leaders in shaping organizational evolution and culture. It is also important to examine the extent to which it is feasible and desirable to develop integrationist organizational cultures based on collaborative cross-organizational links, rather than recognising the possible advantages of some degree of cultural differentiation.

A fourth set of issues concerns the impact of environmental factors on organizational development, particularly the influence of *institutional forces* on organizational goals, structures and cultures. Further work is needed to test and develop the new institutionalist concept of organizational isomorphism, and the extent to which the pursuit of institutional legitimacy leads organizations to adopt structures, rituals and symbols for ceremonial rather than goal-directed purposes. There are considerable implications here for the way in which organizational goals are conceived and for the ways in which we measure and assess organizational success and effectiveness. New institutionalist ideas suggest a need to reconsider the internal focus of much organizational theory, indicating that members may be influenced as much by broader institutional rules and norms as by what happens within the organization. Organizational theorists and indeed managers may have over-estimated the power that organizations have to determine the experiences of members.

However, notwithstanding the influence of environmental factors, the tertiary college study has also shown that what goes on within organizations is also very important, in the light of the considerable inter-college differences that were found. Thus a fifth issue for exploration concerns the ways in which factors *within particular organisations* - the interaction of structure, culture, leadership and organizational saga - combine to make each institution distinctly different from others of the some type.

The final theme, drawing together those listed above, concerns the *management of change*. The study has shown that organizational innovation is a complex and long-term project, characterized by differing perceptions and meanings of the various participants involved, and mismatches between policy intentions and outcomes in practice. It has also suggested that organizational innovation is unlikely to be successful without a supportive environmental context. Although our understanding of the complexity of educational change has increased considerably in recent years (Fullan, 1993; Hopkins *et al.*, 1997; Stoll and Fink, 1996), there is a need for further exploration of strategies for the effective management of change which take fully into account 'non-rational' issues, the multiple meanings of participants, and the environmental factors that more rationalistic, internally focused models of organizational innovation tend to neglect.

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APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1.1 Full-time student questionnaire

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
TERTIARY COLLEGES STUDY

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1

FULL TIME

FOR OFFICE USE		
CARD 1	TCS 1	(1-5)
		(6-13)

This questionnaire is part of a study of tertiary colleges being carried out by the Open University. We would like to know a little about your life and work at college, what your college is like and how you feel about it.

All your answers will be confidential. They will not be seen by anyone else in the college.

Please answer each question. In some questions you will be asked to write your answer in the space or box provided. In other questions you will be asked to put a ring round the number opposite your answer, like this (2)

For example: question 1 asks your age:

If you are 17, you ring the figure 2 as shown here	16.....1	19.....4
	17.....(2)	20-24.....5
	18.....3	Over 24.....6

Please ring only one number for each question unless asked to do otherwise.

A Your personal background

1. Your age

16.....1	19.....4	(14)
17.....2	20-24.....5	
18.....3	Over 24.....6	

2. Sex

Male.....1	(15)
Female.....2	

3. Your father's job (please write in a short precise description below). If your father is dead, retired or temporarily unemployed, put last occupation.

\- [ ] (16)

\- [ ] (17)

Secondary education

4. Type of school you last attended (18)

Comprehensive.....1
Grammar.....2
Secondary modern....3
Independent school (as a boarder).....4
Independent school (as a day pupil)...5
Other(write in)
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _...6

5. Did the last school you attended have a sixth form? (19)

Yes....1
No.....2

6. a) School examinations: O level and CSE
In the boxes below, list the names of all subjects for which you sat O level or CSE exams at school, the date of the exam and grade for each subject. (An example is filled in on the first line of each box.)

GCE O Level		
Subject	Month & year of exam	Grade
English Language	June 1980	C

←EXAMPLE→

CSE		
Subject	Month & year of exam	Grade
Maths	June 1980	5

(20-21)

6. b) Other exams: List below any other exams you have already taken either at school or college.

Course (e.g. A level)	Subject(s)	Exam date	Grade(s)

(22-25)

6. c) If you have listed other exams in 6b) above, where did you take them? (Ring one number)

At school.....1
At college.....2
At school and college....3
Other (write in).....4

(26)

B College programme

7. Your date of entry to this college:

September 1979.....1
September 1980.....2
September 1981.....3
Other date (write in below).....4

Month Year

(27)

8. Your reasons for coming to college

How important for you was each of the following reasons for coming to college? Read through the list on the next page and then ring a number for each reason. If a reason does not apply to you, ring the figure 4.

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Not applicable	
No 6th form at my last school	1	2	3	4	(28)
Wanted a practical training course in preparation for career	1	2	3	4	
Exam qualifications needed to go on to higher education or career	1	2	3	4	
Never considered leaving education at 16	1	2	3	4	
Interested in subjects I'm studying	1	2	3	4	
Failed exams at school and came to college to retake them	1	2	3	4	
Improving career prospects in general	1	2	3	4	
Parents wanted me to continue education	1	2	3	4	
Broadening my outlook	1	2	3	4	
Couldn't find a job	1	2	3	4	
Didn't want to stay on in 6th form at my last school	1	2	3	4	
Other reason (write in below)	1	2	3	4	(39)
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -					(40)

9. Your reasons for your choice of course/subjects

How important for you was each of the following reasons for your choice of course/subjects? Read through the list below and ring a number for <u>each</u> reason. If a reason does not apply to you, ring the figure 4.

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Not applicable	
Course/subjects necessary for chosen career	1	2	3	4	(41)
Course/subjects necessary for higher education	1	2	3	4	
Subjects I'm most interested in	1	2	3	4	
My school exam results allowed little other choice	1	2	3	4	
Subjects I was best at in school	1	2	3	4	
Subjects form an acceptable combination	1	2	3	4	
Other reason (write in below)	1	2	3	4	(47)
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -					(48)

10. Who advised you on your choice of course/subjects to take at college?

Read through the list below and then ring a number for <u>each</u> source of advice to show how important it was for you. For those that do not apply to you, ring figure 4.

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Not applicable	
School form teacher or tutor	1	2	3	4	(49)
School careers staff	1	2	3	4	
School subject teacher	1	2	3	4	
College personal tutor	1	2	3	4	
College subject staff	1	2	3	4	
College head of department	1	2	3	4	
Parents	1	2	3	4	
Friends	1	2	3	4	
My own decision	1	2	3	4	
Other (write in below)	1	2	3	4	(58)

(59) ☐

11. Looking back, would you like to have received more help and information on your choice of course/subjects? (ring <u>one</u> number below)

I had enough help and information.....1 (60)

Would have liked a little more help/information.....2

Would have liked a lot more help/information.....3

<u>Personal timetable</u>

12. Main course and subjects

In the box on the next page list your main course(s), the subjects you are studying, the exams to be taken, with dates, and the number of class hours per week for each subject. (If you are taking a course which includes several subjects (e.g. Business Studies), please list each subject separately as well as the main course). The first 2 lines of the box are filled in as examples.

(see following page)

Course	Subjects	Exam date	No. of hours per week
O level	French	June 1982	3
BEC General Diploma in Business Studies	World of Work	June 1982	2½

. Non-exam subjects:

In the box below list all the non-exam subjects/general studies options you are taking (including sports/PE), the length of each course (e.g. 1 term, 3 terms) and number of class hours each week.

Subject/course	Course length (in terms)	No. of hours per week

(61) For office use (70)

. Private study:

How many timetabled hours per week do you have of private study time? (Write number of hours in box opposite). If you have none write 0 in the box.

No. of hours per week (71)

Leaving out timetabled private study time, how many hours per week, on average, do you spend during term time on private study and homework? (Write number of hours in box opposite.)

No. of hours per week (72-73)

15. Extra-curricular activities

List below any college sports, cultural and recreational activities that you take an active part in, including membership of college clubs and societies. (Do not include activities or classes that are part of your timetabled programme of studies).

1. _

2. _

3. _

4. _

5. _

(74) (76)

Do you attend meetings of the Students' Union?
(Circle one)

Usually.....1
Sometimes.....2
Rarely.....3
Never.....4 (77)

16. Plans after present course

Do you plan to leave this college after finishing your present course?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (78)

17. What are you hoping to do when you leave this college?

University or polytechnic degree course (excluding teacher training).....1 (79)
Teacher training course.....2
Other full-time further education.....3
Vocational training course.....4
Job with training.....5
Job involving no further training.....6
Other (write in) _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

CARD 2

C Views on your course

18. a) Are you studying your first choice of course/subjects?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (14)

b) If no, why not? (Ring all the reasons below that apply to you).

Course/subject(s) not offered by college.....1 (15)
Course/subject(s) full up.....1
Timetable clash.....1
Not enough time, other subjects more important.....1
I didn't have enough qualifications.....1
Would have been unusual combination of subjects.....1
Course/subjects I'm doing are necessary for chosen career/higher education.....1
Other reason (write in)_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.1 (22)

19. a) Are you taking any subject(s) now that you do not really want to take?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (23)

b) If yes, why are you doing so?

_ _

☐ (24)

20. a) Are there any subject(s) that you would like to take but are unable to?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (25)

b) If yes, why are you unable to take it/them?

_ ☐ (26)

21. a) If given an open choice would you, ideally, have liked to take a broader course studying more subjects?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (27)

b) If yes, why?

_ ☐ (28)

22. a) If given an open choice would you, ideally, have liked to concentrate on fewer subjects?

Yes.....1
No.....2 (29)

b) If yes, why?

_ _ _ _

25. How long did it take you to settle down and feel at home at college? (Ring one number)

1 week.....1
2 weeks.....2
1 month.....3
a term.....4
more than a term.5 (39)

26. What did you find were the main problems in adjusting to college life? (Ring all numbers below that applied to you)

Different relations with staff - treated more as an adult...1 (40)
Independent approach to work - organizing your own notes, reading etc.....1
Higher standard and greater depth of the work.....1
Organizing own private study & homework.....1
Getting used to new subjects or course not studied at school.....1
Making new friends.....1
Other (write in)_ _.1 (46)

27. How much information and advice have you had in college on the following three things? (Ring one number for each of them)

	a great deal	a fair amount	not very much	none at all	
Your personal welfare at college.....	1	2	3	4	(47)
Your work and progress at college.....	1	2	3	4	
Your future career or education after leaving college.....	1	2	3	4	(49)

28. a) How much information and advice would you like to have in college about these three things? (Ring one number for each of them)

	much less	a little less	neither more nor less	a little more	much more	
Personal welfare.....	1	2	3	4	5	(50)
Work and progress.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Future career or education.....	1	2	3	4	5	(52)

28. b) If you have ringed a 4 or 5 for any of the above in question 28a), please write in below what kinds of information and advice you would find helpful.

_ _ _ \

33. a) Does the Students' Union play an important part in the life of the College? (63)

Yes.....1
No.....2
Don't know.3

b) If yes or no, give the main reason for your answer:

- - - -

G General views on college

35. Below is a list of student comments about college in general. For each comment, ring the number which shows how far you agree or disagree with it as applied to your own college. (Ring one number on each line)

CARD 3

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
This college has a friendly atmosphere.....	1	2	3	4	5	(14)
There are too many rules and regulations.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I found it easy to settle down when I arrived.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The staff are not interested in the students as people.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel I know some staff well.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I would leave college tomorrow if I could get a job.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I shall be sorry to leave college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The college is impersonal and unfriendly.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel that students are treated as adults here....	1	2	3	4	5	
If I had the choice again I would not come to college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I have made a lot of friends since I came to college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are not made to work hard enough.....	1	2	3	4	5	
On the whole I enjoy my work at college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are expected to work by themselves too much before they are able to.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The college offers students plenty of opportunities...	1	2	3	4	5	
I don't know many staff or students at college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students here get plenty of individual help from staff.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The college gives students too much freedom.....	1	2	3	4	5	

(cont. over)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
College life is a good preparation for going to work or future education.....	1	2	3	4	5
The college is only interested in students passing exams.....	1	2	3	4	5

(33)

36. If you had to pick out three good points of your college, what would they be?

1. _ _ _

39. a) What do you miss most about school?

- - - -

APPENDIX 1.2 Part-time student questionnaire

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
TERTIARY COLLEGES STUDY

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2

PART TIME

FOR OFFICE USE		
CARD 1	TCS 1	(1-5)
		(6-13)

This questionnaire is part of a study of tertiary colleges being carried out by the Open University. We would like to know a little about your life and work at college, what your college is like and how you feel about it.

All your answers will be confidential. They will not be seen by anyone else in the college.

Please answer each question. In some questions you will be asked to write you answer in the space or box provided. In other questions you will be asked to put a ring round the number opposite your answer, like this (2).

For example: question 5 asks

Did the last school you attended have a sixth form?

If your answer is no, you ring the figure 2 as shown here.

Yes.....1
No.....(2)

Please ring only one number for each question unless asked to do otherwise.

A Your personal background

1. Your age

16.....1
17.....2
18.....3
19.....4
20-24.....5
25-30.....6
31-40.....7
Over 40.....8

(14)

2. Sex

Male.....1
Female.....2

(15)

3. Your father's job (please write in a short precise description below). If you father is dead, retired or temporarily unemployed, put last occupation.

- - - -

Secondary education

4. Type of school you last attended

Comprehensive.....1
Grammar.....2
Secondary modern.....3
Independent school (as a boarder).....4
Independent school (as a day pupil)....5
Other (write in below).....6

(18)

5. Did the last school you attended have a sixth form?

Yes.....1
No.....2

(19)

6. a) School examinations: O level and CSE

In the boxes below, list the names of all subjects for which you sat O level or CSE exams at school, the date of the exam and grade for each subject. (An example is filled in on the first line of each box.)

GCE O Level		
Subject	Month & year of exam	Grade
English Language	June 1980	C

←EXAMPLE→

CSE		
Subject	Month & year of exam	Grade
Maths	June 1980	5

(20-21)

6. b) Other exams

List below any other exams that you have already taken either at school or college, with dates and exam grades.

Course (e.g. A level)	Subject(s)	Exam date(s)	Exam grade(s)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

(22) (27)

6. c) If you have listed other exams in 6b) above, where did you take them? (Ring one number). (28)

At school.....1
At college.....2
At school and college.....3
Other (write in below).....4

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

B Employment

7. Read through the following and ring the number which shows your present employment situation:

I am: (ring one) (29)

in a paid job full-time.....1
in a paid job part-time.....2
unemployed but looking for a full-time job.....3
unemployed but looking for a part-time job.....4
full-time housewife.....5
retired.....6
other (write in) _...7

(30)

8. a) If you have a paid job (full or part-time), what is the exact title of your job?

- - - -

11. b) List below the subjects that you study on this course

Subjects:

- - - -

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Not applicable	
Teacher(s) at school	1	2	3	4	(58)
College personal tutor	1	2	3	4	
College subject staff	1	2	3	4	
College head of department	1	2	3	4	
Employer	1	2	3	4	
Careers officer	1	2	3	4	
Parents	1	2	3	4	
Friends	1	2	3	4	
My own decision	1	2	3	4	
Other (write in below)	1	2	3	4	(59)

- - - -

16. Do you attend meetings of the Students' Union:
(ring one number)

Usually.....1 (54)
Sometimes.....2
Rarely.....3
Never.....4

D Views on your course

17. a) Are you studying your first choice of course/subjects?

Yes.....1 (55)
No.....2

b) If no, write in below the main reason why you are not studying your first choice.

- - - -

E Guidance

College entry

21. When you first arrived here, were you given enough help and guidance by the college in settling down and adjusting to college life? (Ring one number only)

I had enough help/guidance.....1 (73)
Would have liked a little more help/guidance.....2
Would have liked a lot more help/guidance.....3

22. How long did it take you to settle down and feel at home at college? (Ring one number)

1 week.....1 (74)
2 weeks.....2
1 month.....3
A term.....4
More than a term.5

23. How much information and advice have you had in college on the following three things? (Ring one number for each of them)

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	None at all	
Your personal welfare at college.....	1	2	3	4	(75)
Your work and progress in college.....	1	2	3	4	(76)
Your future career or education after leaving college.....	1	2	3	4	(77)

			(78-80)

24. a) How much information and advice would you like to have in college about these three things? (Ring one number for each of them)

CARD 2

	Much less	A little less	Neither more nor less	A little more	Much more	
Personal welfare.....	1	2	3	4	5	(14)
Work and progress.....	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
Future career or education.....	1	2	3	4	5	(16)

24. b) If you have ringed a 4 or 5 in question 24a) on the previous page, please write in below what kinds of information and advice you would find helpful.

- - - -

29. a) Does the Students' Union play an important part in the life of the college?

Yes.....1 (27)
No.....2
Don't know....3

b) If yes or no, give the main reason for your answer:

- - - -

H General views on college

31. Below is a list of student comments about college in general. For each comment, ring the number which shows how far you agree or disagree with it as applied to your own college. (Ring one number on each line)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
This college has a friendly atmosphere.....	1	2	3	4	5	(41)
There are too many rules and regulations.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I found it easy to settle down when I arrived.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The staff are not interested in the students as people.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel that I know some staff well.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Part-time students are not important to the college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I shall be sorry to leave college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The college is impersonal and unfriendly.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel that students are treated as adults.....	1	2	3	4	5	
If I had the choice again I would not come to college..	1	2	3	4	5	
I have made a lot of friends since I came to college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are not made to work hard enough.....	1	2	3	4	5	
On the whole, I enjoy my work at college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are expected to work by themselves too much before they are able to.....	1	2	3	4	5	
The college offers students plenty of opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5	
I don't know many staff or students at college.....	1	2	3	4	5	
Students here get plenty of individual help from staff..	1	2	3	4	5	
The college gives students too much freedom.....	1	2	3	4	5	

Cont/d...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here.....	1	2	3	4	5
The college is only interested in students passing exams.....	1	2	3	4	5

(60)

32. If you had to pick out three good points of your college, what would they be?

1. _ _ _

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2 Staff questionnaire

OPEN UNIVERSITY
TERTIARY COLLEGES STUDY
STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		
CARD 1	TES 1	(1-5)
		(6-10)

Please put a ring round the number corresponding to your answer, like this (3), or write the answer in the space provided.

A. Timetable and responsibilities in college

1. Grade of current post

HOD 1 (11)
Principal leacturer ...2
Senior lecturer 3
Lecturer II 4
Lecturer I + ...5
responsibilities 6
Lecturer I 7
Other (please specify below) 8

2. Responsibilities (e.g. Deputy HOD, section leader, i/c subject area/course)
_ _ _ _

5. Do you do service work for other departments/sub-units? Yes...1 (21)
No....2

6. Do you have responsibilities as a course tutor or personal tutor for a group of students? Yes...1 (22)
No....2

a) If yes, what functions are involved in your role as a tutor? (please circle all items that apply).

Induction of new students 1 (23)
Student guidance on work and progress in college.....1
Student guidance on careers/higher education.....1
Student guidance on personal matters 1
Registration of student attendance 1
Other (please write in below).....1 (28)

- -

B. Personal background and career

7. Do you have qualifications that entitle you to graduate status for salary purposes? Yes...1 (29)
No....2

8. Do you have a professional teacher training qualification? Yes...1 (30)
No....2

9. Are you a member of a teacher union? Yes...1 (31)
No....2

If yes, which one: NATFHE 1 (32)
AMA 2
NUT 3
PAT 4
Other (please specify below)...5

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

10. Sex: Male.....1 (33)
Female.....2

11. Age: Under 26.....1 (34)
26 - 30 2
31 - 35 3
36 - 40 4
41 - 45 5
46 - 50 6
51 - 55 7
over 55 8

12. Career background (before joining the staff of this tertiary college)
Please indicate your career background below. For each relevant item enter the number of years experience you have had in this field.
(Write one year as [0][1] and 12 years as [1][2].)

	Teaching	No. of years experience		
01	Primary school			(35-36)
02	Secondary modern school			(37-38)
03	Grammar school			(39-40)
04	Comprehensive school (specify age range)			(41-42)
05	Independent school (specify age range)			(43-44)
06	Sixth form college			(45-46)
07	FE college			(47-48)
08	Teacher training college			(49-50)
09	University/polytechnic			(51-52)
10	Industry			(53-54)
11	Commerce			(55-56)
12	Civil service/local government			(57-58)
13	Other(s) (please specify)			(59-60)

13. For how many years have you held a teaching post in this college? (61)

Years

0 - 2...1 11 - 15...4
3 - 5...2 16 - 20...5
6 - 10..3 over 20...6

14. a) Were you a member of the teaching staff here in the first year of the college's existence as a tertiary college? (62)

Yes...1
No....2

If no, please go to question 15.

b) If yes, did you previously hold a post in one of the institutions which were included in the re-organization of post-16 education in this area? (e.g. school, FE college). (63)

Yes...1
No...2

If no, please go to question 15.

c) If yes, which type of institution? (64)

FE college.....1
Grammar school.....2
Secondary modern school..3
6th form college.....4
Other (please write in)....5

If you have ringed an answer in question 14c, please go to question 17.

15. Field of last post before joining the staff of this college. Please enter the appropriate code number from the left-hand column of question 12 in the box opposite (e.g. 01 if you were a primary school teacher)

Field of last post [ ] (65) (66)

16. To what extent was you decision to apply for a post here influenced by the fact that this is a tertiary college?

Not at all.....1 (67)
Not very much....2
A fair amount....3
A great deal.....4

C. College objectives and organization

17. Objectives

In column A below please ring all those objectives which you think are currently regarded as important in your college. Then in column B, ring all those objectives which you think should be regarded as important in your college.

	Col. A	Col. B	
To enable the individual student to develop his/her capacities and interests as fully as possible	1	2	(68)
To enable students to pass the relevant examinations for higher education or careers	1	2	
To provide for the needs of the handicapped and other disadvantaged members of society	1	2	
To serve and contribute to the community	1	2	
To meet the pastoral needs of students by providing effective personal, educational and careers guidance	1	2	
To provide an education relevant to work and society	1	2	
To integrate students of different backgrounds and abilities	1	2	
To act as a focus for social, cultural and sporting activities in the community	1	2	
To help students to develop questioning and critical attitudes	1	2	
To bridge the gap between school and work	1	2	
To give parity of esteem to all students	1	2	
To act as a provider of continuing education for students of all ages	1	2	
To enable each student to develop his/her self-confidence and social skills	1	2	(80)
			CARD 2
To prepare students for their chosen careers	1	2	(11)
To bridge the traditional barriers between 'academic' and 'vocational' education	1	2	(12)
To provide leisure and recreational classes for life enrichment	1	2	(13)

(14) [ ] (18)

Organization

18. Below are some comments made by staff about the advantages and drawbacks of the organization systems adopted in their colleges. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each comment as applied to the organization structure in your own college.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree	
Effective channels of communication.....	1	2	3	4	(19)
Lack of clear lines of responsibility...	1	2	3	4	(20)
Enables a flexible approach, across the whole college, to meeting student needs.....	1	2	3	4	(21)
Little co-operation between departments/ sub-units.....	1	2	3	4	(22)
Provides effective liaison with contributory schools.....	1	2	3	4	(23)

19. a) Please indicate in column A below the extent of your own involvement in decision-making at departmental/sub-unit level with regard to each of the following:

	(24-30) Column A			(31-37) Column B		
	A great deal of involve-ment	Some involve-ment	Little/no involve-ment	Would prefer more	Current level OK	Would prefer less
Course planning.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Course content/ syllabus.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Teaching methods.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Exams & assessment...	1	2	3	1	2	3
Student pastoral matters.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Routine admin-istration.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Allocation of financial resources..	1	2	3	1	2	3

b) In column B above, indicate for each item the extent to which you would prefer more or less involvement in decision-making.

20. a) Please indicate in column A below the extent of your own involvement in decision-making at institutional/academic board level with regard to each of the following:

	(38-44) Column A			(45-51) Column B		
	A great deal of involvement	Some involvement	Little/no involvement	Would prefer more	Current level OK	Would prefer less
Course planning.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Course content/ syllabus.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Teaching methods.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Exams & assessment.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Student pastoral matters.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Routine administration.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Allocation of financial resources....	1	2	3	1	2	3

b) In column B above indicate for each item the extent to which you would prefer more or less involvement in decision-making.

21. a) Please indicate in column A below the extent of your contact with colleagues in other departments/sub-units with regard to each of the following:

	(52-58) Column A			(59-65) Column B		
	A great deal of contact	Some contact	Little/no contact	Would prefer more	Current level OK	Would prefer less
Course planning/content..	1	2	3	1	2	3
Teaching.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Teaching methods.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Exams & assessment.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Student pastoral matters.....	1	2	3	1	2	3
Routine administration...	1	2	3	1	2	3
Social interaction.....	1	2	3	1	2	3

b) In column B above indicate for each item the extent to which you would welcome more or less contact with colleagues in other departments/ sub-units.

22. What degree of integration and shared perspective is there between ex-school and ex-FE staff within the college?

A great deal....1 (66)
A fair amount...2
Not very much...3
None at all.....4

23. What degree of co-operation is there between sub-units of the college concerned with GCE work and those concerned with vocational courses?

A great deal....1 (67)
A fair amount...2
Not very much...3
None at all.....4

D. Students

24. To what extent does the college:

	To a great extent	To a fair extent	Not very much	Not at all	
a) enable students to choose individual course programmes suited to their own abilities and interests?	1	2	3	4	(68)
b) enable students to choose a mixture of academic and vocational elements in their course programmes?	1	2	3	4	(69)
c) enable social mixing to take place between students on different types of full-time courses?	1	2	3	4	(70)
d) enable social mixing to take place between full and part-time students?	1	2	3	4	(71)

Pastoral provision

25. Please indicate the extent to which you consider that the college provides adequate guidance to students on each of the following:

	A Very adequate	B Fairly adequate	C Not very adequate	D Not at all adequate	
Transition to college/ induction	1	2	3	4	(72)
Personal matters	1	2	3	4	(73)
Work and progress in college	1	2	3	4	(74)
Future career/education after college	1	2	3	4	(75)

☐☐☐☐ (76-80)

CARD 3

26. If you have ringed columns C or D for any of the items in question 25 above, please indicate the ways in which you think guidance provision for students might be improved.

- ☐ (11)

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐ (14)

E General views on tertiary colleges

27. a) What do you consider are the main benefits of teaching in a tertiary college (as opposed to other types of institution catering for the 16+ age group)?

- ☐ (15)

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐ (18)

b) What are the main drawbacks?

- - - -

APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3

TERTIARY COLLEGES STUDY

Interview schedule for principals and vice-principals

1 Objectives

Main aims and objectives of the college.

2 Ethos

(a) To what extent does the college have a distinctive ethos?
(b) If it does, in what ways is this ethos manifested?

3 Organisation

(a) Why has the particular organisational pattern adopted by the college been chosen?
(b) What are the main advantages and disadvantages of this form of organisation?
Advantages :
Disadvantages:
(c) What modifications have been made to the organisation system?
(d) Why have these been made?
(e) What modifications do you expect to make in the future, and why?

4 Curriculum

(a) What methods are used to enable the individual student to choose an appropriate course of study?
(b) What effect does the availability of a wide range of academic and vocational course options within one institution have on student course profiles?
(c) (i) Is it college policy to provide the opportunity for an academic/vocational mix in students' study programmes?
(ii) If so, is this encouraged by the college?
(iii) What is the extent of student take-up of the opportunity? (proportion of this year's intake, overall proportion)

(d) (i) Is there a trend for able students to select vocationally-orientated options (e.g. BEC, TEC) rather than the traditional 3 A levels?

(ii) If so, why?

(e) What are the main constraints to:

(i) flexibility of course choice and

(ii) an academic/vocational mix in student course programmes?

(f) What steps are taken to provide appropriate pastoral care and guidance for students:

(i) on entry to college;

(ii) on work and progress;

(iii) careers and future education;

(iv) personal matters.

5 Social Integration

(a) Does the college aim to encourage social integration between :

(i) students on various types of full-time courses?

(ii) full time and part-time students?

(b) If so, what steps are taken to promote i) and ii) above?

(c) What are the main constraints to i) and ii) above?

6 Management

(a) What are your views on the major management problems involved in :

(i) establishing and

(ii) developing a tertiary college?

(b) The Macfarlane report stated that: 'there is a challenge in managing [tertiary colleges] to ensure that the traditional virtues of largely part-time vocational provision in Further Education are not harmed by the very different needs and characteristics of full-time academic sixth form provision, or vice versa'. What are your views on this statement? How do you attempt to meet the challenge described by Macfarlane?

(c) Do you consider that i) the Burnham Further Education arrangements and ii) the Further Education Regulations are appropriate for the management and operation of tertiary colleges? If no, to either or both :

(d) What changes in i) and ii) do you consider necessary in order to make them appropriate for tertiary colleges?

APPENDIX 4

APPENDIX 4.1 Sampling frame for students

Open University Tertiary Colleges Study

Student Samples

Please select one group from each of the following categories - by random selection from all tutor/class groups in the appropriate category.

A) Full-time tutor/class groups

A level or equivalent	1 A level History (2nd year group)	2 A level Physics (2nd year group)	3 TEC Diploma in Technology (2nd year group)	4 One other course to represent an area of work in which the college specialises
O level or equivalent + sub-O level	5 O level French	6 O level Geography	7 BEC General Diploma in Business Studies	8 One other course as 4 above - eg. City & Guilds: catering/ Hairdressing, etc.

B) Part-time day and evening tutor/class groups *

A level or equivalent	9 BEC National Certificate/ Diploma in Business Studies	10 An A level subject+	11 A TEC Certificate Course	12 Another course, as 4 above
O level or equivalent + sub-O level	13 A City and Guilds course	14 An O level subject+	15 Another course as 4 above	16 Another course, as 4 above

* Please exclude leisure and recreational class groups.

\+ Either the A or the O level in a commercial subject if possible.

APPENDIX 4.2 Instructions on the administration of student questionnaires

Notes on the administration of the student questionnaires

A. It would be most helpful if staff could explain the following to students who are completing the questionnaires:

1. The answer numbers are included merely for coding purposes; they do not indicate order of merit or importance.

2. 'General studies' is used to describe areas of study undertaken by full-time students in addition to their main courses. Please make this clear to students if another term (e.g. complementary studies, minority studies) is used in your college.

3. Students are asked to enter the number of class hours spent on various aspects of their course programmes. Please emphasise this if class periods in your college are not arranged in one-hour sessions.

4. Some students may need guidance on multi-column questions. Please make it clear that they should ring one number on each line.

5. As we are interested in students' own personal views, please ask them not to discuss their answers with each other.

B. Timing The questionnaires should take approximately 45 minutes to complete. If students are short of time, please stop them 10 minutes before the end of the time available and ask them to move on to complete the section entitled 'General views on college', (pages 13-15 of Student questionnaire 1, pages 11-12 of Student questionnaire 2).

APPENDIX 5

APPENDIX 5 Sample page from coding frame for full-time student questionnaire

Col. no.	qu.no.	Code	Description/variable
(26)	20b)	1 not part of course/ not included in course syllabus	why not taking subjects would like to take
		2 not offered by college	
		3 not enough time, other subjects more important	
		4 timetable clash	
		5 class(es) full	
		6 lack of qualifications/ ability	
		7 changed mind but too late/ not allowed to transfer to another subject	
		8 other - list on separate sheet	
		9 not answered (i.e. ringed 1 in col. 25)	
(27)	21a)	as quest. & 9 = not answered	like broader course
(28)	21b)	1 More interesting/more variety in timetable	why would have liked a broader course
		2 To broaden outlook	
		3 More qualifications	
		4 Don't like specialized subjects	
		8 other - list on separate sheet	
		9 not answered (i.e. ringed 1 in col. 27)	
(29)	22a)	as quest. & 9 = not answered	like fewer subjects
(30)	22b)	1 Some subjects included in course not necessary/irrelevant/ boring	why would like fewer subjects
		2 To focus in greater depth/ gain deeper insight/ understanding/through study - interest in particular/ main subjects	
		3 Need more time for important subjects/too little time to study all subjects taken - time constraints	

APPENDIX 6

Appendix 6

Additional tables for chapter 6

	Reason	N of responses =	%age
1	I didn't have enough qualifications	100	32.5
2	Time table clash	45	14.6
3	Other reasons	41	13.3
4	Course/subjects not offered by college	38	12.3
5	Course/subjects I'm doing necessary for chosen career or higher education	36	11.7
6	Not enough time/other subjects more important	17	5.5
7	Course/subject(s) full up	16	5.2
8	Would have been an unusual combination of subjects	15	4.9
	Total *	308	100

Table 6a: Reasons why students not taking their first choice of course

** The total adds up to more than the 20.1% (N= 209) respondents mentioned in the text, as they were asked to indicate all reasons which applied to them, and hence some mentioned more than one reason.*

	Reason	N of responses =	%age
1	Compulsory part of course/timetable	181	54.0
2	Necessary for future job/education	44	13.1
3	Other reasons	37	11.4
4	Changed my mind but too late to transfer to another subject	29	8.6

5	Miscellaneous/unclassifiable: e g name of subject given with no reason why taking it	24	7.2
6	Required by college to fill up my timetable	20	5.9
	Total *	335	100

Table 6b: Students' reasons for taking subjects they did not want

A few students did not give a reason and hence the totals do not add up to the 33.5% (N = 343) mentioned in the text.

	Reason	N of responses=	%age
1	Not enough time/other subjects more important	81	25.2
2	Timetable clash	60	18.7
3	Not offered by college	54	16.8
4	Not part of course/syllabus	47	14.6
5	Lack of qualifications/ability	36	11.2
6	Other reasons	22	6.8
7	Changed mind but too late to transfer	14	4.4
8	Class(es) full	7	2.2
	Total *	321	**100**

Table 6c: Student reasons why not taking subjects they would like to

* *A few students did not give their reasons, and hence totals do not add up to the 32.1% (N = 330) indicated in the text.*

%ages: time spent on main subjects

College No.	too much	about the right amount	too little	N = 100%
1	2.4	92.9	4.8	84
2	1.4	88.7	9.9	71
3	3.0	68.7	28.3	99
4	10.0	67.0	22.0	99
5	2.0	75.5	22.5	102
6	8.3	84.5	7.1	84
7	2.0	81.2	16.8	101

8	12.6	69.0	18.4	87
9	5.9	79.4	14.7	102
10	2.1	84.5	13.4	97
11	0.0	90.1	9.9	101
Total N	46	820	161	1027
%	4.5	79.8	15.7	100

chi square signif %age
p = < 0.05

Table 6d: Student views on balance of time spent on main subjects by college

College No.	too much	about the right amount	too little	not on my timetable	N = 100%
1	13.1	61.9	9.5	15.5	84
2	1.5	20.6	13.2	64.7	68
3	46.0	46.0	8.0	0.0	100
4	6.2	33.0	14.4	45.4	96
5	12.6	43.7	8.7	35.0	103
6	1.2	33.7	9.6	55.4	83
7	32.7	21.8	9.9	35.6	101
8	21.7	32.5	7.2	38.6	83
9	19.6	63.7	7.8	8.8	102
10	15.3	23.5	8.2	53.1	98
11	14.6	46.9	3.1	35.4	96
Total N =	178	39.9	9.1	346	1014
%	17.5	39.3	9.0	34.1	100

chi square signif %age
p = < 0.01

Table 6e: Student views on balance of time spent on general studies by college

Item no	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know	N = 100%
1	14.7	71.5	8.6	1.6	3.6	1026
2	14.3	66.0	13.3	3.3	3.1	1024
3	1.8	7.6	50.8	37.0	2.8	1020
4	10.0	61.3	17.3	3.7	7.6	1009
5	2.8	10.4	70.4	10.2	6.2	1024
6	12.3	67.1	12.2	3.2	5.2	1014
7	1.8	7.6	61.9	23.9	4.8	1016
8	23.9	63.7	9.4	1.4	1.7	1018
9	2.3	11.9	61.9	21.8	2.2	1014
10	3.4	11.0	52.5	25.5	7.5	1020
11	10.4	60.0	18.5	3.5	7.5	1021
12	9.9	74.6	10.9	1.2	3.4	1020
13	6.2	37.2	32.0	9.8	14.8	1015
14	25.7	57.3	10.4	2.5	4.1	993
15	9.8	10.5	33.4	35.0	9.3	1007
16	3.6	9.4	48.0	32.4	6.5	1015
17	3.6	18.3	58.8	14.5	4.7	1015
18	8.6	53.1	16.4	4.1	7.8	1015
19	4.0	14.3	58.2	7.8	5.7	1012
20	5.7	22.9	55.4	8.1	7.9	987

Table 6f: Student attitudes to college, percentages *

* *Percentages in table 6f exclude non-respondents, and hence are slightly higher than those in table 6.4 which was calculated on the basis of all students in the sample.*

	Reasons why better off	N =	%age
1	Treated more as adults	130	24.0
2	More freedom/fewer rules/restrictions	125	23.0
3	Wider range of subjects/opportunities/facilities, better facilities	89	16.4
4	Better staff/better teaching/more attention from staff/better communication with staff	61	11.2
5	Meet wider range of people	44	8.1

6	Change is stimulating	37	6.8
7	Easier transition to work/HE, relevance of course to future work/HE	30	5.5
8	Other	27	5.0
	Total	543	100

Table 6g: Main reasons why better off than in a school sixth form

Table 6h 'Good points' of college: categories

The categories which were developed to classify the good points of college identified by students are shown below. Answers covered a broad range of factors and were coded into 7 broad categories (and a miscellaneous group), most of which included a number of subcategories, as follows.

General atmosphere of college

(1) Good atmosphere, relaxed attitudes and ethos, good relations in general

(2) Friendliness:
- (i) friendly staff;
- (ii) friendly students;
- (iii) opportunities to meet people and make friends.

Educational factors: college as a learning environment

(3) Staff:
- (i) good teaching/teachers;
- (ii) helpful staff, individual help and advice available where necessary, staff concern for student progress and welfare.

(4) Courses:
- (i) wide range available;
- (ii) relevance to future job/education;
- (iii) interesting course/subjects;
- (iv) classes well organized/not too large.

Factors relating to personal/social development

(5) Treated as adults, responsibility for own work/progress, freedom to organise one's own time.

(6) (i) Opportunities to develop independence, self confidence, motivation, self discipline for transition to HE or working life;

(ii) opportunities to meet opposite sex, develop confidence in interacting with opposite sex/adults.

Facilities and equipment

(7) (i) Facilities and equipment in general;

(ii) facilities for course work: classrooms, workshops, laboratories;

(iii) environmental factors : cleanliness of college/classrooms;

(iv) canteen (meals);

(v) social and recreational facilities: common room, sports accommodation and equipment;

(vi) library/private study facilities.

Miscellaneous items

(8) (i) Factors specifically differentiating college from schools: no uniforms, fewer rules and regulations, private study time;

(ii) closeness to home/convention location, adequate transport available;

(iii) break and lunch times;

(iv) other factors.

Proportions of responses in each category are shown in Table 6h below.

Category no.		N =			% of responses
1.				392	16.0
2.	i)	125			
	ii)	59	=	284	11.6
	iii)	100			
3.	i)	214	=	401	16.4
	ii)	187			
4.	i)	111			
	ii)	10	=	194	7.9
	iii)	50			

5.				269	11.0
6.	i)	76	=	100	4.1
	ii)	24			
7.	i)	175			
	ii)	96			
	iii)	76			
	iv)	55	=	649	26.5
	v)	176			
	vi)	69			
8.	i)	49			
	ii)	49	=	158	6.5
	iii)	13			
	iv)	47			
	Total =			2445	100%

Table 6h: Good points

Table 6i 'Bad points' of college: categories

The categories used to group student comments on the bad points of college are shown below.

(1) *General college environment*

(i) Unfriendliness

(ii) Size/impersonality

(iii) Overcrowded

(2) *Educational factors: college as a learning environment*

Staff

(i) Poor inadequate teachers/teaching

(ii) Teaching methods – e. g. not enough essay work

(iii) Staff difficult to communicate with

(iv) Individual staff/classes

Courses

(v) Irrelevant subjects/too much general studies/not enough time on main subjects

(vi) No general studies, not enough variety of study/too much time on some subjects

(vii) Too much private study time

(viii) Too little private study time

(ix) Too much homework

(x) Too little homework/not obliged to do homework.

Organization

(xi) Factors relating to the organization and timetabling of the college day/year, e.g. classes too long, length of college day.

(3) *Factors relating to personal development*

(i) Too much freedom

(ii) Not treated as adults/too strict

(iii) Lack of organized social activities/sports activities.

(4) *Facilities and equipment*

(i) General site/split site problems/inadequate buildings

(ii) Inadequate heating/lighting

(iii) Accommodation for work: classrooms, workshops, labs.

(iv) Canteen (meals)

(v) Library/private study facilities

(vi) Car/bike parking facilities.

(5) *Social and recreational facilities*

Common room, gym, playing fields, sports equipment, etc.

(6) *Others*

(i) Distance from home/travelling time/problems with public transport -- poor service, etc.

(ii) Expenses, e.g. exam fees

(iii) Miscellaneous

(7) No bad points.

Table 6i below shows response rates in the various categories.

Category no.		N =			% of responses
1.	i)	58			
	ii)	45	=	177	8.7
	iii)	74			
2.	i)	43			
	ii)	57			
	iii)	56			
	iv)	106			
	v)	22			
	vi)	36	=	582	28.6
	vii)	14			
	viii)	46			
	ix)	24			
	x)	18			
	xi)	160			
3.	i)	35			
	ii)	45	=	125	6.1
	iii)	45			
4.	i)	134			
	ii)	77			
	iii)	154	=	645	31.7
	iv)	138			
	v)	128			
	vi)	14			
5.				290	14.4
6.	i)	59			
	ii)	14	=	195	9.6
	iii)	122			
7.				19	0.9
	Total =			2033	100%

Table 6i: Bad points

No. of activities	N =	%age
None	192	18.3
1	191	18.2
2	64	6.1
3	29	2.8
4 or more	27	2.6
Not answered	549	52.2
Total	1052	100

Participation in extra-curricular sports activities

No. of activities	N =	%age
None	352	33.5
1	99	9.4
2	26	2.5
3 or more	15	1.5
Careers oriented	11	1.0
Not answered	549	52.2
Total	1052	100

Participation in extra-curricular cultural activities

No. of activities	N =	%age
None	412	39.2
1	77	7.3
2	13	1.2
3 or more	4	0.4
Not answered	546	51.9
Total	1052	100

Participation in extra curricular recreational activities

Table 6j: Extra curricular activities

Attendance		
Frequency	N =	%age
Usually	120	11.5
Sometimes	171	16.4
Rarely	212	20.4
Never	537	51.6
Total	1040	100

Table 6k: Attendance at Students' Union meetings

	Problem	Responses N =	%age
1.	Independent approach to work - organising your own notes, reading, etc.	456	19.5
2.	Getting used to new course or subjects not studied at school	435	18.6
3.	Organizing own private study and homework	386	16.6
4.	Higher standard and greater depth of the work	376	16.2
5.	Making new friends	312	13.4
6.	Different relations with staff - treated more as an adult	257	11.0
7.	Other problems	110	4.7
	Total	2332	100

Table 6l: Problems in adjusting to college life

	Types of advice/information	Responses N =	% age
1.	Careers in general, job opportunities, help with job applications, visits to firms	347	40.2
2.	Work and progress in current course, more frequent feedback/reports, chances of passing exams, etc.	212	24.6
3.	More personal/individual advice from/discussion with lecturers/tutors/HoDs/careers staff	154	17.9

4.	Further/higher education, applications, future qualifications and study options after present course	83	9.6
5.	Information on grants, finances, financial aid, entitlement to fare reductions, etc.	38	4.4
6.	Information on college guidance system in general	13	1.5
7.	Don't know/don't know enough about system to know what I need	9	1.0
8.	Others	6	0.7
	Total	862	100

Table 6m: Areas of advice/information identified by students requiring more guidance.

APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7

Additional tables for Chapter 7

Attitude Item No.	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Don't know*	*N = 100%*
1.	7.6	63.4	13.8	2.1	13.0	845
2.	10.1	72.5	10.6	3.0	3.8	841
3.	2.2	8.9	60.1	18.2	10.6	833
4.	5.5	41.4	20.4	6.1	26.7	824
5.	3.8	13.9	48.2	6.1	28.0	836
6.	10.7	61.8	14.9	5.0	7.6	832
7.	3.1	8.2	50.1	17.4	21.1	828
8.	10.1	59.3	20.0	5.2	5.3	829
9.	5.5	37.6	42.7	7.5	6.7	824
10.	5.1	12.9	51.8	15.3	14.8	836
11.	4.8	46.1	30.2	6.8	12.2	838
12.	7.9	65.9	16.4	6.1	3.7	835
13.	6.5	22.4	29.7	20.4	21.0	829
14.	6.6	14.6	48.1	21.2	9.6	836
15.	4.0	17.4	51.4	18.0	9.2	828
16.	5.4	35.3	27.9	7.9	23.6	822
17.	5.5	22.3	51.4	7.7	13.0	830
18.	7.7	29.4	38.2	4.7	19.9	814
19.	8.7	52.0	22.8	6.3	10.2	830
20.	6.0	12.7	43.2	26.5	11.6	837

Table 7a: part-time students' attitudes, percentages*

* Percentages in table 7a exclude non-respondents and hence are slightly higher than those in table 7.3 which was calculated on the basis of all students in the sample.

Types of guidance/advice		*Responses*	
		N =	*%age*
1.	Work and progress in current course, more frequent feedback/reports, chances of passing exams, etc.	232	42.0
2.	Careers in general, job opportunities, help with job applications, visits to firms	120	21.7
3.	Further/higher education opportunities and applications, future qualifications and study options after present course	94	17.0
4.	More personal/individual advice from/discussion with lecturers/tutors/HoDs/careers staff	50	9.1
5.	Information on college guidance system in general	28	5.1
6.	Information on grants, finances, financial aid, entitlement to fare reductions, etc.	14	2.5
7.	Others	8	1.4
8.	Don't know/don't know enough about system to know what I need	6	1.1
	Total	552	100%

Table 7b: Types of guidance and advice sought by students

Attitude Item No.		% agree/strongly agree Male	Female	N =	chi square signif %age, p= < :
	a) General atmosphere and ethos				
2.	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived	82.7	91.3	780	0.5
4.	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	59.8	73.8	580	0.5
	b) Extent to which student are treated as adults				
5.	There are too many rules and regulations	28.1	15.2	588	0.5
6.	I feel that students are treated as adults here	75.8	84.7	740	1.0
	c) Social relationships with students				
8.	I have made a lot of friends since I came to college	70.2	78.7	754	2.5
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	43.2	51.3	741	5.0
	d) Relationships with staff				
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	43.2	51.3	741	5.0
10.	The staff are not interested in the students as people	26.3	11.0	690	0.01
	e) College work : general views				
12.	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	70.6	88.4	773	0.01
13.	I shall be sorry to leave college	29.5	51.1	630	0.01
14.	If I had the choice again I would not come to college	28.7	14.0	724	0.01
	f) College work : extent of supervision and help from staff				
16.	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	47.6	63.7	612	0.1
	g) Exam pressure				
18.	The college is only interested in students passing exams	49.1	39.7	634	5.0
	h) College for part-time students in particular				
19.	Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here	63.9	74.6	715	1.0

Table 7c: Part-time student attitudes by gender

* Item 9 is included in both categories (c) and (d), and therefore appears twice

Item No.	*Attitude*	*% agree/strongly agree 1st year*	*2nd/3rd years*	*N =*	*chi square signif. %age p = < :*
	a) General atmosphere and ethos				
1.	This college has a friendly atmosphere	86.9	76.9	717	0.1
2.	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived	89.3	82.5	786	2.5
4.	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	70.3	59.1	586	1.0
	b) Extent to which student are treated as adults				
5.	There are too many rules and regulations	17.4	30.3	592	0.1
6.	I feel that students are treated as adults here	86.2	72.0	748	0.01
	c) Social relationships with students				
8.	I have made a lot of friends since I came to college	69.1	75.9	762	5.0
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	55.3	38.4	748	0.01
	d) Relationships with staff				
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	55.3	38.4	748	0.01
10.	The staff are not interested in the students as people	16.8	24.7	693	2.5
11.	I feel that I know some staff well	53.1	62.1	719	2.5
	e) College work : general views				
12.	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	82.4	71.6	782	0.1
13.	I shall be sorry to leave college	40.8	32.9	636	5.0
	f) College work : extent of supervision and help from staff				
16.	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	59.5	48.6	616	1.0
	h) College for part-time students in particular				
19.	Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here	74.2	61.7	721	0.1

Table 7d: Part-time student attitudes by year group

* Item 9 is included in both categories (c) and (d), and therefore appears twice

Item No.	*Attitude*	*% agree/strongly agree*			*chi square signif. %age,p = < :*
		Sandwich/ block /day release	*Others*	*N =*	
	a) General atmosphere and ethos				
1.	This college has a friendly atmosphere	76.0	91.7	697	0.01
2.	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived	82.9	91.2	764	0.5
3.	The college is impersonal and unfriendly	14.3	8.8	700	5.0
4.	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	59.0	72.7	569	0.5
	b) Extent to which student are treated as adults				
5.	There are too many rules and regulations	27.8	17.4	575	2.5
6.	I feel that students are treated as adults here	73.8	87.0	727	0.01
7.	The college gives students too much freedom	14.2	16.4	620	NS
	c) Social relationships with students				
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	42.7	53.2	725	1.0
	d) Relationships with staff				
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	42.7	53.2	725	1.0
10.	The staff are not interested in the students as people	23.7	16.0	673	2.5
11.	I feel that I know some staff well	54.0	66.8	691	0.5
	e) College work : general views				
12.	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	69.5	89.0	760	0.01
13.	I shall be sorry to leave college	26.8	54.5	619	0.01
14.	If I had the choice again I would not come to college	30.0	13.0	712	0.01
	f) College work : extent of supervision and help from staff				
15.	Students are not made to work hard enough	24.2	23.0	714	NS
16.	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	46.3	66.5	595	0.01
17.	Students are expected to work too much by themselves before they are able to	32.7	30.4	687	NS
	g) Exam pressure				
18.	The college is only interested in students passing exams	50.4	40.6	618	5.0

Table 7e: Part-time student attitudes by attendance mode

* Item 9 is included in both categories (c) and (d), and therefore appears twice

Attitude		*% agree/strongly agree*					*chi square signif*
Item No.		*Course category*				*N=*	*%age, p= < :*
		1	2	3	4		
	a) General atmosphere and ethos						
1.	This college has a friendly atmosphere	91.8	82.0	78.2	758	708	0.5
2.	I found it easy to settle down when I arrived	936	83.9	85.8	792	780	0.5
3.	The college is impersonal and unfriendly	5.3	11.5	12.9	193	720	0.5
4.	The college offers students plenty of opportunities	82.1	59.8	62.3	54.4	589	0.1
	b) Extent to which student are treated as adults						
5.	There are too many rules and regulations	9.6	15.7	33.6	25.6	594	0.01
6.	I feel that students are treated as adults here	92.2	76.9	75.4	71.1	747	0.01
	c) Social relationships with students						
8.	I have made a lot of friends since I came to college	65.1	78.2	78.4	67.3	758	0.5
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	58.9	49.2	43.8	35.1	747	0.1
	d) Relationships with staff						
* 9.	I don't know many staff and students at college	58.9	49.2	43.8	35.1	747	0.1
10.	The staff are not interested in the students as people	10.1	12.3	26.6	29.1	692	0.01
11.	I feel that I know some staff well	66.4	62.0	56.1	51.3	713	5.0
	e) College work : general views						
12.	On the whole, I enjoy my work at college	91.6	75.9	76.1	62.1	778	0.01
13.	I shall be sorry to leave college	63.1	37.7	29.0	23.1	635	0.01
14.	If I had the choice again I would not come to college	8.3	21.3	33.6	25.5	727	0.01
	f) College work : extent of supervision and help from staff						
15.	Students are not made to work hard enough	34.4	16.5	25.5	17.4	736	0.1
16.	Students here get plenty of individual help from staff	74.1	51.4	53.9	37.9	727	0.01
	g) Exam pressure						
18.	The college is only interested in students passing exams	33.1	41.1	50.2	56.9	639	0.1

	h) College for part-time students specifically						
19.	Part-time students get plenty of help with their work here	80.7	61.8	72.2	48.1	719	0.01

Table 7f: Part-time student attitudes by course group

Categories : 1 = GCE, Open College and pre-university
2 = BEC and secretarial
3 = C & G
4 = TEC

* Item 9 is included in both categories (c) and (d), and therefore appears twice